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EDITORIAL

MIDDLE EAST JAWBONING

In the Middle East, things fall apart; the Camp David center does not hold. Prime Minister Menachem Begin takes umbrage because Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak wants to bypass Jerusalem on his trip to Israel. Begin, under pressure from his right-wing supporters, who are unhappy about the impending withdrawal from the Sinai, fires back that if Mubarak boycotts Jerusalem, he will pass up Cairo. Things would be going a lot more smoothly, he adds, if the sainted Sadat were still alive.

Mubarak has his own domestic malcontents (most Egyptians, it seems), but his real fears originate elsewhere. While he must not jeopardize the reversion of the Sinai, he cannot let the Arab nations, whose friendship he is cultivating, see him groveling to Israel.

And what is Washington doing in the face of these hitches in the Camp David process? Secretary of State Haig says blandly, "We are satisfied that relations between Israel and Egypt are moving ahead . . . and the whole peace process will continue after April with more vigor." In the absence of a Middle East policy, the United States refills the old Nixonian prescription of massive doses of arms to complaining nations. Dr. Weinberger has been pushing them in Jordan and firming up an agreement with Saudi Arabia on the Awacs.

Asked at his March 1 press conference what success he had in Riyadh, Weinberger said, "We got it." The same day, the Saudi defense minister was quoted by an Arab daily as calling reports that an agreement was reached "baseless."

Such double-speak, coupled with Weinberger's arms-bazaar mentality, is no substitute for diplomacy. The region is now a tinderbox, and time is running out for the Camp David accords. Has Washington resigned itself to war as the only way out of the impasse?

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THE 'SOCIAL ISSUE' GAME

FAMILY FEUD ON THE LEFT

BARBARA EHRENREICH

What makes the New Right "new," compared with the familiar conservatism of men like Barry Goldwater, is its insistent emphasis on issues related to sexuality and the family. In dealing with other New Right themes—militarism, racism and various schemes to accelerate the upward flow of wealth—the left is on firm, or at least well-charted, ground. But bring the discussion around to the family (as in "profamily") and the ranks of the left fall into disarray. If the other side is for chastity, piety and other values bred in *Little House on the Prairie*, is the left, then, opposed? If they are the "moral majority," is everyone else, as one self-effacing button proposes, a member of an "immoral minority"?

One novel position that has been gaining ground is that the left ought to try to co-opt the profamily position for itself. Betty Friedan offered the feminist—some would say postfeminist—version of this approach in her book *The Second Stage*. More recently, former New Leftist Michael Lerner has offered an all-encompassing left-wing profamily program, which was recently summarized in *The Nation* [see "Recapturing the 'Family Issue,'" February 2]. His program has generated so much controversy that *In These Times* praised it for being "one of the few live issues in an otherwise somnolent left." For those of us who have not been dozing peacefully through the Reagan era, Lerner's proposal is still worth taking seriously—if only as a cautionary example of what can happen if we rush off, full of unthinking enthusiasm, to meet the right on its own turf and with its own symbols.

Lerner's proposal stems from the insight that

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LETTERS.

THE COMPANY SHE KEEPS

New York City

I call the attention of *Nation* readers to a misstatement in Susan Sontag's response to the comments on her speech at Town Hall ["Communism and the Left," *The Nation*, Feb. 27]. Miss Sontag writes: "Diana Trilling welcomes me to the ranks of *her* [she supplies the italics] anticommunists (thanks, but no thanks) . . ." I did not welcome Miss Sontag to the ranks of my anticommunists. I precisely wrote: "I welcome Miss Sontag to her new difficult life as an anticommunist." Miss Sontag functions as what is called a radical; she places herself on the "democratic left." Mine has always been a liberal anticommunism. I recognize the difference and took Miss Sontag's self-definition into full account. After all, what is her speech finally about except the fear that in embracing anticommunism she might have put herself in company not of her choice? Just as there has always been reason to fear the association between radicalism and procommunism or neutralism, there has always been ground to fear the association of anticommunism with reaction. And this fear is especially justified today when all around us we see right-wing anticommunism steadily growing in power in the intellectual community as well as in government.

Diana Trilling

SUPPORTING SOLIDARITY

Princeton, N.J.

The *Nation* symposium ["Communism and the Left," *The Nation*, Feb. 27] in response to Susan Sontag's speech at Town Hall was a healthy corrective to a jejune performance. It would be unfortunate, though, if the flurry surrounding Sontag's remarks were to distract from the serious contributions made by E.L. Doctorow, Alexander Erlich, Sam Meyers, Ed Sadlowski, Daniel Singer, Gore Vidal and Ben Zemsky, among notable others, at the February 6 rally.

The meeting sought to mobilize the left in support of the Polish workers movement while exploring how demands for workers' control apply to the condition of American labor. It was precisely the shrill anticommunism of those who are hostile to workers' movements everywhere that we sought to expose and to counter.

In pursuit of our aims, American Workers and Artists for Solidarity has an ongoing program that should be of interest to *Nation* readers (we are sponsored by The Nation Institute and by P.E.N. American Center). A delegation, consisting to date of Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut, Paul Robeson Jr., Ed Sadlowski, Sam Meyers, Dave Skocik and myself, will travel to Warsaw to see detained Solidarity leaders and officials of the regime. We are preparing a list of jailed and detained people so that corresponding union locals in the United States can pressure for the release of coal miners, steel workers, electricians and members of other trades and professions. Meetings like the recent one at Town Hall will occur in Chicago on April 24, Denver on April 28 and Los Angeles on May 1. Daniel Singer, Ed Sadlowski, Paul Robeson Jr., Gore Vidal and others will appear at these rallies.

We urge support, suggestions and participation for our ongoing work from *Nation* readers. We may be reached at P.O. Box 1205, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

Ralph Schoenman
American Workers and Artists for Solidarity

IS NICARAGUA INDEPENDENT?

Medford, Mass.

I feel compelled to respond to the letter by poets Eugenio Evtuchenko, Allen Ginsberg and Ernesto Cardenal ["Declaration of Three," *The Nation*, Feb. 20], which upholds Nicaragua's independence from both superpowers. "At this moment . . . there is an intent on the part of the people to defend their economic and intellectual independence," they wrote. "Nicaragua is a big experimental workshop . . ."

How then does one explain the small but appalling item in the newspapers recently reporting that representatives from the independent Polish labor union Solidarity were denied admission to Nicaragua on the ground that they were "tools of U.S. imperialism"? Ronald Reagan and his cohorts have an easy explanation; but for those of us on the left who sincerely oppose U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and El Salvador as well as Soviet aggression, the task is far less simple.

I, like others of my generation, fought for years against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and rightfully so. I do not regret my participation in a single one of the perhaps hundreds of demonstrations against that war that I joined. At the same time, I must admit that our opposition was fraught with some of the same naïve illusions about the absolute independence and morality of the Vietnamese that these poets manifest about Nicaragua in their letter. Vietnam did, finally, grant the U.S.S.R. its bases and invade Cambodia.

What we must affirm in these complex times, with the United States moving aggressively toward Central America, Soviet troops in Afghanistan and (if we are to believe the Eritreans) Cuban troops dropping napalm on Eritrean freedom fighters, is our opposition to all aggression—without naïve illusions.

If Nicaragua were as "independent" as is claimed, it should have welcomed with open arms the representatives of a genuinely working-class, genuinely independent movement.

As the three poets suggest, it is an important role of the writers of the world to bring forth the truth. They seem sincere in their aspiration that Nicaragua not "become a puppet in anybody's hands." I hope that they turn out to be right.

Susan Schwartz Jhirad

F.B.I. AT HARVARD: UPDATE

New York City

In "Hoover Goes to Harvard" [*The Nation*, Oct. 24, 1981], I asked how high in the Harvard hierarchy the cooperation with Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover reached, and I suggested, on the basis of a letter from Hoover to the Boston F.B.I. office, that it was a "nagging possibility" that it reached the office of Harvard President James B. Conant.

We need be nagged no longer, for the possibility has now become a certainty. On January 7, in response to an order of U.S. District Court Judge Robert Carter, the F.B.I. made a supplemental release of documents in which it restored certain words that had been deleted from the documents as they had first been released. On February 9, 1949, the Boston SAC (Special Agent in Charge) sent a memorandum to Hoover. In the revised document just released by the F.B.I., the last two paragraphs of that memorandum read as follows:

> *It is believed that the results of the work of the international program and the Russian Research Center can be made available to the Bureau through contact with President James Bryant Conant of Harvard University, who has on occasion indicated his respect for the Bureau's work and his understanding for its many and varied interests in connection with internal security matters.* It appears that a presentation of the Bureau's desire to be informed on such matters to President Conant personally would make available the current programs and results of research work of the Center on such basis that *the interests of the Bureau would not be revealed to the personnel of the particular program and in that way no possible embarrassment could possibly come as the result of any inquiries being directed in an attempt to obtain material outlines and other items of interest in connection with this matter.*
>
> Accordingly, the Bureau is requested to consider the advisability of authorizing this office to discuss this matter with President Conant on a discreet and personal basis to determine his reaction to the suggestions set forth above. [Harvard Russian Research Center file, serial #100-360557-15. Emphasis in original.]

In fact, Hoover rejected the suggestion on May 11, 1949, but another document just released by the F.B.I.—an internal Bureau memorandum from L. Whitson to H.B. Fletcher, written the same day—makes it

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EDITORIALS.

Darkness at Noon

It is difficult not to feel a genuine sense of tragedy when reading Oriana Fallaci's interview of Mieczyslaw Rakowski (published in *The Washington Post* of February 21). Rakowski is Deputy Prime Minister of Poland. Throughout the period when Solidarity was a legal organization, he was a strong advocate of compromise with it. As the representative of the Polish Communist Party, he negotiated many of the most useful and imaginative agreements with the union before martial law was imposed. For a long period, Rakowski was also the editor of *Polityka*, easily the most interesting and open of the theoretical journals published in Communist Europe. He is not, by any manner of means, a fascist. And yet, in the interview he delivers himself of this door-slamming phrase: "In politics the individual does not count."

If this is true, Rakowski's own efforts in the last decade have been in vain. One can sense some of the confusion he feels in his reply when Fallaci asked him why he admitted that he had not slept on the night of December 11, after learning that martial law would be imposed two days later:

> Because I was sad, because we had failed, because this was a necessary yet tragic decision, a national disaster. And also because I was aware that we were about to take a historic step, about to write a new chapter in the history of Poland.

Obviously, not every statement in those sentences can be simultaneously true. A decision deemed by the party to be "necessary" cannot be "a national disaster"—lesser Poles are incarcerated for lesser criticisms. Nor can it easily be the prelude to "a new chapter in the history of Poland." Nor, if what Rakowski says about individuals is correct, can this be right:

> My opinion counted and with my writing I have been fighting the foolish in my party and in my government long before the others. I have been preaching the need for reforms and of independent unions long before Solidarity.

Yet Rakowski still refuses to see Solidarity as the vindication

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of his many warnings and criticisms. A bit later he refers to its members in classic Stalinese as "demagogues and anarchists." The only person for whom he has any kind words is Archbishop Jozef Glemp, hardly a natural ally for a reformist Communist.

Some of what Rakowski says is probably factually untrue. It is difficult to believe that the martial law operation was not planned long in advance. Of course, all governments have contingency plans and emergency police for sudden eruptions and breakdowns. But the military takeover was a carefully executed operation, involving selective mass arrests, or perhaps selective arrests on a large scale. According to Rakowski, the decision had not been taken when Solidarity was offered membership in a National Conciliation Front on November 4. But why, in that case, did the government offer Solidarity such a humiliatingly small number of seats in the front? It requires the Christian charity of an Archbishop Glemp not to suspect an element of provocation in such an offer.

As for Rakowski's denials of Russian involvement in the purge, they only serve to confirm what must be obvious—that the Warsaw government allowed, as a matter of course, an enormous level of Russian involvement in Poland's daily affairs. The government may have become so habituated to this situation that it came to seem a normal one, but it is hardly an assertion of independence to claim, as Rakowski does, that:

> Let's say that maybe he [Marshal Viktor Kulikov, commander in chief of the Warsaw Pact] came to remind us that he was the head of the Warsaw Pact, and don't-you-forget-it. Well, not exactly to us, maybe, but to the hotheads of Solidarity.

Since Kulikov had arrived in Warsaw without an invitation at the end of November, this seems a rather generous attitude on Rakowski's part. Generous, though, might not be the word to describe this admission: "Of course, we cannot deny that next to us there is this huge ally." This is perhaps the most grudging tribute ever paid by a ranking Warsaw Pact official to the motherland of the October Revolution.

Rakowski belongs to a dying breed in a dying system. There was a time when loyal men and women in Eastern Europe would voluntarily sacrifice their all for the Soviet Union. Many of them made that sacrifice in a way they had not dreamed of, but the fact remains that there were such people and that they distinguished themselves in a life-and-death battle with Hitlerism. That credit has now run out entirely. The Moscow system is sterile, and it therefore cannot reproduce. No new Rakowskis are coming forward to fill the ranks of the party. The Russians must now rely on opportunists and mediocrities as their proxies. And these people will, as even Rakowski did in the end, transfer their power to the army rather than share it with their fellow citizens.

Rakowski's father was murdered by the Nazis. He has tried and failed to be both a good socialist and a loyal party man. His first wife has joined KOR, the Polish dissident group, his second wife has joined Solidarity, one of his sons has applied for political asylum in West Germany and the other one lives in Spain. It's all over.

So now Rakowski is reduced to double talk. Lech Walesa "is not under arrest. He is simply interned." The next lot of trade unions, if permitted at all, will have "the right of striking, not of disrupting." These, as Rakowski may have known in his Marxist youth, are distinctions without a difference. Some may say that the mere fact of his granting such a candid interview is a cause for mild optimism. Nobody who understands its true pathos could really make such an unkind mistake.

Setting the Record Straight

Three weeks ago we published a version of Susan Sontag's February 6 speech at Town Hall in New York City. Although we disagree with much of what she had to say, we thought she had addressed an important issue: the attitude of the left to communists and communism.

Accordingly, we asked Sontag for permission to reprint her remarks, and she gave it. She made two requests, however. First, she said that she had revised the original speech for publication and wanted us to use the new version rather than the one she had delivered at the Solidarity rally. And she also asked that she be allowed to append a rebuttal to the comments of our contributors. To these requests we agreed. However, when her text arrived, we noticed that while it included most of what she had said at Town Hall, some of her remarks had been deleted.

In one omitted passage, Sontag contended that those who read the *Reader's Digest* between 1950 and 1970 would have been better informed about the "realities of communism" than those who read only *The Nation* or the *New Statesman*. Since we had initially decided to publish Sontag's statement in part because she had referred so explicitly to *The Nation*'s coverage, we would have happily included that particular remark, and made a point of telling our readers in an editorial preface that she had made the deletion.

Meanwhile, the *Soho News* had published a transcript of her speech (without her permission), and we told our readers that too. For our trouble, the usually perceptive Alexander Cockburn of *The Village Voice* accused us of "hypocrisy," apparently under the assumption that we had chastised the *Soho News*. And then an unbylined writer in *The New York Times* of February 27 implied that *The Nation* had "edited" the Sontag speech to eliminate her criticism of "liberal publications."

Let's set the record straight.

On the matter of Sontag's message: we thought it was simplistic. We are pleased, however, that it generated some acute debate in our pages, for example, Jacobo Timerman's article last week, in which he wrote, *inter alia*:

> The world is not symmetrical, and I will not alienate

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myself from the world because it becomes difficult to tolerate asymmetry. Despite the difference that exists between one horror and another—slavery in Saudi Arabia and martial law in Poland, etc., etc.—I set no priorities; one has to join all the battles. Despite certain terrible similarities, every horror defines itself: communism is communism; fascism is fascism.

On the quotation about the *Reader's Digest*: we didn't edit it out as *The Times* suggests. We edited it into the preface because she had edited it out of her revised text. And we were pleased that a number of our commentators pointed out that fact.

On the merits of the comparison itself: we leave to others the pleasurable task of analyzing our editorials and articles of thirty years ago. But we thought our readers might be interested in the education they may have missed by not being exposed to the *Reader's Digest* all those years.

First, there is the helpful vocabulary. Communists, for example, are referred to as "Red slave drivers and sadists," and Soviet policy as "the Kremlin's harvest of hate." Second, there are bold forecasts, such as "Why Red China Won't Break with Russia," the title of a July 1957 article, and the repeated predictions of the imminent collapse of the Soviet empire. Third, there is the inside dope from behind the Iron Curtain. Who, for instance, is "the most hated man in Yugoslavia"? Marshal Tito, of course. Then there is the foreign policy analysis, which may be encapsulated in the question heading an article by David Lawrence: "Is Peaceful Co-Existence the Answer?" (No; it is "the counsel of despair.") Finally, there are the menace-from-within reports by the magazine's stable of experts on the U.S. Communist Party, including J. Edgar Hoover ("Red Spy Masters in America"), Max Eastman ("Outlaw the Communist Party!"), the *Saturday Evening Post* ("Stalin's Plans for the USA") and Whittaker Chambers ("What Is a Communist?"). We don't pretend that this is a representative sample—we could have mentioned "How Far Has 'Creeping Socialism' Crept?"—but it gives a taste of the fare the magazine was regularly serving to its readers.

On a final, more serious matter, let us make clear that we disapprove of the lawsuit Sontag recently filed against the *Soho News* claiming infringement of copyright because the paper published her speech without permission. Our feeling about such a suit is that it is inimical to freedom of the press, harmful to the writing and publishing community generally and, if successful, would set a dangerous and sticky precedent.

We should know, since we are involved in another, very different copyright infringement case (involving our publication of a news article about Gerald Ford's memoirs, *A Time to Heal*), which reconvenes this week in New York Federal District Court with Judge Richard Owen presiding. One of the issues of *The Nation* case is what is news. Fred Friendly, David Halberstam and Richard Reeves all testified that what the *Nation* published was news. We think what Sontag said was news too. But it is bad news to us that so many of our colleagues in the news business want to focus on such non-news as "editing" that didn't take place or "hypocrisy" that wasn't there, rather than to explore the merits of the issue.

UNFAMILIAR QUOTATIONS

Friedrich Nietzsche on Disarmament

"No government will now admit that it maintains an army to satisfy occasional desires for conquest; rather, it is supposed to serve a defensive purpose. As their advocate they summon that morality which justifies self-defense. But this means: assigning morality to oneself and immorality to the opponent, because he must be considered aggressive and eager for conquest if our state is necessarily to consider the means of self-defense. In addition, one declares him—who no less than our state denies aggression and claims to maintain an army for defensive purposes—a hypocrite and cunning criminal, who only too gladly would pounce upon *a harmless and unskilled sacrifice without a fight.*

"Thus do all states face each other now: they presuppose bad intentions on their neighbor's part and good ones on their own. This premise is, however, an inhumanity, *as bad and worse than war: indeed, it is already at root the invitation to and cause of wars, because, as I say, it brands the neighbor with immorality and thereby seems to provoke hostile intentions and deeds. The doctrine of the army as a means of self defense must be as thoroughly renounced as the desire for conquest. And there will come, perhaps, a great day, on which a people, remarkable for wars and victories, for the highest development of military order and intelligence, and accustomed to make the heaviest sacrifices for these things, cries out of its own free will: 'we shatter the sword'—and dismantles its entire armed forces to their foundations.* To make oneself defenseless, while one was the most defensible—*that is the means to* real *peace, which must always rest upon a peaceful disposition. The so-called armed peace, as it prevails in every country at present, is that disquieted disposition which trusts neither itself nor its neighbor and, half from hatred, half from fear, will not lay down its arms.*

"Better to go under than to hate and fear, and far better to go under than to make oneself hate and fear—*this must also become the highest maxim of every individual sovereign society! Our representatives should know that they are laboring in vain when they work for a 'gradual reduction in the military budget.' On the contrary: only when this burden is at its greatest will the God who alone can help be at hand. The tree of military glory can only be destroyed at a single blow, by one stroke of lightning; but lightning comes, as well you know, from the clouds—and from on high."*

(Translated by Daniel Johnson)

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ARTICLES.

ROYALTY RIP-OFFS

Oil Companies on The Honor System

FRED J. COOK

"It is not my personal idea that all oil companies are thieves or composed of thieves. . . . But I have discovered that, in dealing with honest men, it is not unacceptable or unwise to count your change or cut the cards." —Ken Cory, chairman of the California State Lands Commission, testifying before two House subcommittees looking into royalty rip-offs from Federally leased lands.

In its dealings with oil companies pumping energy gold from public lands the Federal government has neglected for more than twenty years to "count the change or cut the cards." It has accepted, generally without question, whatever royalty payments the companies have chosen to give; and when the checks have come in, it has said, in effect, "Oh, thank you, sir." The result has been the loss of literally billions of dollars of revenue.

The Reagan Administration estimates that this "honor system" is costing Washington and the states (which receive half of the royalty payments) $650 million a year. That figure may be too low because there is no way to determine how much oil and gas has simply vanished without being reported. It has been stolen outright from tank farms or diverted by embezzlement, by underreporting of the amounts pumped and by fudging the value of the product.

The opportunities for chicanery are endless. There are now 17,000 oil and gas fields on lands owned by the Federal government and Indian tribes, and the companies working them have been paying some $4 billion in royalties a year. But a 1979 study by the General Accounting Office estimated that from 7 percent to 10 percent of the total production from the leases has gone unreported. And California officials, drawing upon their own inspections of state-owned lands, say that the G.A.O. figure is short. They estimate that as much as 16 percent of all the oil and gas extracted from public lands goes unreported.

On January 21, the Reagan Administration announced, with considerable fanfare, that it would take steps to end the royalty evasions. It released a report prepared by a special Commission on Fiscal Accountability of the Nation's Energy Resources, which was headed by David Linowes and numbered among its members Michel Halbouty, the Texas oilman who was an adviser to the Reagan transition team on energy. The commission recommended sixty changes in royalty reporting and accounting procedures and urged Congress to pass legislation imposing stiff fines and jail sentences on royalty dodgers. Interior Secretary James Watt subsequently announced that some of the recommendations had been put into effect.

From reports in the press the public would not have known that Watt had fought against altering the honor system or that the Linowes commission was appointed only after the Administration had been prodded by a series of Congressional hearings and by a suit brought against the Secretary by Ken Cory for the State of California, which nine other Western states have joined. The suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., last May 26, and the Linowes commission was formed in July. Cory's suit called on Watt to furnish accurate data on the amount of royalty money owed to the Federal government and to give California its fair share, and charged that the Secretary had "refused to proceed with the immediate institution of accepted accounting practices" and that he had announced "his intention to adopt revised accounting procedures which will not take full effect until 1984." It also accused Watt of denying he had a duty to try to collect "all monies due the plaintiff for all past years."

In a press conference following the filing of the suit, Cory pointed out that twenty-two years ago, the G.A.O. had called attention to the lack of adequate Federal procedures for auditing royalty payments. Despite that, Cory said, "the best that Secretary Watt has to offer is that, if we just leave him alone, he will have a system ready to collect future revenues by 1984. That's newspeak all over again. . . . We are not running a welfare system for the oil companies."

Testifying on September 23, 1981, at a joint hearing of two House subcommittees that was chaired by Representative Edward Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, Cory called Watt's delayed plan "an invitation to chicanery."

"You are telling the lessees," he continued, "that you do not have to account now and if you are a good and honest citizen . . . you can look for your rewards in Heaven, and the rest of you can take your rewards now."

There is abundant evidence that a large number of "citizens" have chosen to take their rewards now. The chaos in the royalty reporting system is traceable in part to unwieldy enforcement procedures within the Interior Department. The Secretary is responsible for leasing Federal lands through the Bureau of Land Management. But the royalty reports go to the U.S. Geological Survey, which is totally unequipped to handle them because its principal duties are scientific, not bookkeeping and accounting.

A G.A.O. report issued in December 1969 noted that it had called the department's attention to shortcomings in the system on two previous occasions, and said: "The Survey's present internal auditing organization consists of one employee called Chief Inspector." Obviously, a lone chief inspector was unlikely to do much checking up on oil company reports.

In 1972, the G.A.O. made its own audit of the Red Wash

Fred J. Cook writes frequently for The Nation *on energy issues. The Fund for Investigative Journalism sponsored research for this article.*

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Field in Utah. The oil company that leased the Federal land purchased most of the field's output; it also controlled the pipelines used to transport the oil. The company, or its subsidiaries, "since 1961 [have] established the only posted prices for the entire Red Wash Field," the G.A.O. reported. The company used the posted prices of nearby Rangely Field, adding on 11 cents a barrel for transportation, as a guide in setting its own prices. The G.A.O. found it "quite significant" that the Red Wash Field prices began at 23 cents a barrel higher than those at the Rangely Field and increased to a 56 cent a barrel difference. The lessee furnished no information to justify its higher prices, but regional officials of the Geological Survey told the G.A.O. that "they planned no further inquiry." An isolated case, perhaps, but it illustrates both the ease with which prices could be marked up and the indifference of the U.S.G.S. to what was going on. It was hardly the way the Federal watchdog should have been watching.

By 1979, the G.A.O. reported, "All data used in the royalty collection system originated with the oil and gas companies." The Geological Survey no longer relied on a lone chief inspector; it had forty-seven inspectors to monitor some 17,000 leases. But the number of inspectors was still inadequate, and a G.A.O. study reported that only four regional offices were making any attempt to double-check royalty payments. The work of the Metairie, Louisiana, office was cited as an example of what could be accomplished with a little effort. After conducting just eight audits of lease accounts for the nine-month period ending September 30, 1978, the Metairie office collected $7.5 million in back royalties.

Citing its own spot checks, the G.A.O. added:

> The examples disclosed during our review plus the experience of a large private oil and gas company which audits oil and gas leases led us to believe that additional royalties can be collected. Audits conducted by the oil and gas company show that royalties due are *normally understated by 7 to 10 percent*. [Emphasis added.]

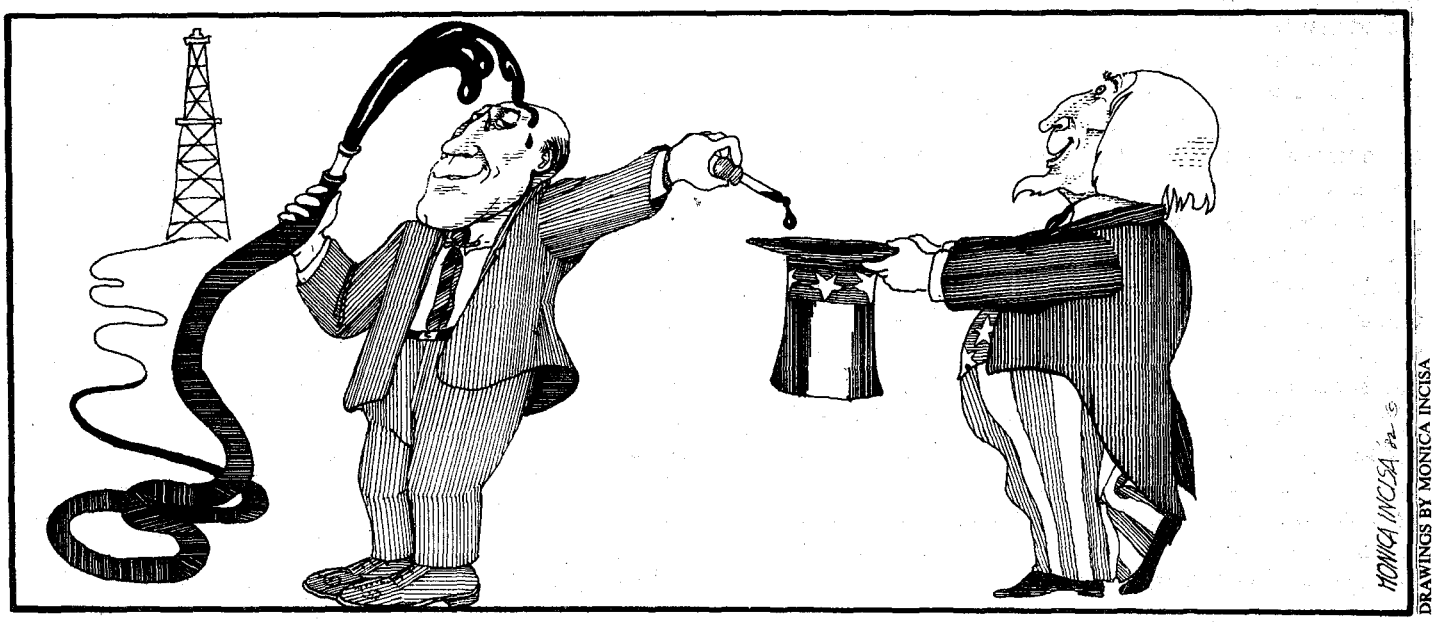
Skeptical California officials point out that the "oil and gas company" wasn't identified by the G.A.O. They suggest that because of the company's ties to the industry, the 7 percent to 10 percent estimate could be too conservative.

One thing is obvious: the opportunities for looting and "skimming" are virtually limitless in the oil and gas industries. Under the present royalty collection system each company reports the *value* of the oil or gas taken from a leasehold. If it is an onshore lease, the company sends the U.S.G.S. a check for 12.5 percent of the figure it has set. In the case of an offshore lease, the royalty rate is 16.67 percent.

One Congressional aide told me: "The people in the industry say that unless you know the *amount* of oil produced, you can't get anywhere. The key is how much is produced in a field, not how much is sold." To illustrate his point, he showed me a diagram of a typical tank farm operated by Amoco, the marketing arm of Standard Oil of Indiana. Oil pumped from the wells passes through a series of sediment and purification tanks. Sludge settles to the bottoms of the tanks, and at the end of the line there is a pit into which the sludge is drained off. But if the valve that is opened to drain off the sludge just happens to be left open longer than necessary, a lot of oil can escape from the tanks to be siphoned off later.

Each of the tanks has a 4-inch valve at the top that is sealed shut by Federal inspectors. Anyone drawing off oil illegally must break the seal. "But at the bottom of the tanks," the Congressional aide told me, "there is a 2-inch valve that is not sealed at all. Anyone who wants to get some oil can just hook up his hose—they all have hoses that can fit the 2-inch valve—and draw it off."

There are other ways of taking the oil. This particular Amoco tank farm has an 8,200 barrel a day capacity. The oil is drawn off from the tops of the treatment tanks and funneled through pipelines to storage tanks. "These tanks have no seals on them at all," the Congressional aide said. "Just regular valves that can be opened by anyone. And this whole system has been approved by U.S.G.S. Approved! When you don't have any control over who turns a spigot on or off, you have a problem." He shook his head in



DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

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disbelief as he explained that there is no system for monitoring production. Instead, royalty payments are calculated on the basis of reported sales.

Thus far, nearly all the attention in the media and in Congressional hearings has been focused on the theft of oil from tanks on Indian lands. (CBS's *60 Minutes*, for example, has reported on this practice.) Some of the most colorful Congressional testimony about this particular scam was given by Charles Thomas, a former inspector for the U.S. Geological Survey who now works as an investigator for the Blackfoot Nation. Thomas, who likes to patrol the oil fields at night, spotted so many trucks carrying stolen oil that the Blackfoot adopted him and named him Chief Nightrider.

Thomas's nightriding made him highly unpopular in certain quarters; he was shot at on one occasion, and his wife's car was driven off the road on another. Despite his best efforts, the bootlegging of oil continued. He told Representative Markey's subcommittee that he had put nine separate Federal seals on a tank in a field where he suspected that thefts were taking place. Then he was suddenly transferred out of the district. Curious about what happened to the tank after he was transferred, he asked a colleague, George Campbell, to check it. Campbell reported back that the seals were broken and the tank was dry. "That gives you an idea of the opinion, or the esteem, which these oil producers held for the U.S.G.S," Thomas said. "They broke the seals and hauled the oil. They can do anything they want to, anything: they think they are big enough to get away with it."

While this kind of theft makes for a colorful television report, it represents a minor royalty rip-off, Congressional sources say. "If you lined up all the trucks in the country, there wouldn't be enough to account for the losses," one aide told me. The really large losses are engineered through more sophisticated ploys. Among them:

§ A leaseholder pumping oil from a new well "forgets" for a couple of months to tell the U.S.G.S. that the well is producing.

§ A lessee reports he's selling his oil for, say, $14 a barrel when he's selling it for $16. He pockets the difference. On thousands of barrels of oil that can be quite a difference.

§ A lessee reports he's sold 30,000 barrels when he's sold 50,000. His report is accepted. There is no check. "Run tickets are just dumped into boxes, all jumbled up, and no one ever checks them," one source said.

§ Even if a lessee's reports are accurate, they often arrive months, even years, late. There is no penalty for late reporting and no interest charge.

Until recently, the Geological Survey had no inspectors in Wyoming. Then in November 1981, a joint Federal-state auditing team discovered that royalties totaling $8 million were owed on twenty out of twenty-four leases in the state. Amoco, which operates five leases containing 150 wells in the Little Buffalo Basin, paid $1.2 million to "correct" its earlier royalty statements. The auditors checked further and charged that Amoco was in arrears for more than $1.3 million on four other leases, a charge that the company disputes.

In November 1979, a team of Federal auditors scrutinized Tenneco Oil Company's reports on wellhead gas produced at three of its fields between November 1975 and August 1978. Among its findings: production volume was incorrectly reported; production on two leases during December 1975 was not reported at all; and the oil's B.T.U. content, which is the basis for calculating royalties, was set too low. Tenneco had paid $780,192.17 in royalties before the audit; afterward, it owed an additional $557,850. In other words, Tenneco had underpaid by 42 percent.

Conoco, the Federal auditors found, had neglected to pay any royalties on one lease between March and June of 1980. It had paid $18,455.71 in royalties before the audit; afterward, it owed $322,578.75. Conoco had underpaid by 95 percent. Getty Oil, Chevron and Mobil also made additional payments after being audited. As one source told me: "These errors are discovered just by adding up the figures." No one knows what the total royalty loss on all leases may be, because once oil or gas eludes the reporting system, it vanishes.

The Linowes commission's findings confirmed the chaotic situation. The commission found, as had the G.A.O. and several Congressional committees, that the Geological Survey had not verified the data reported by the oil and gas companies and that "its lease account records are so unreliable that the agency often does not know which companies have paid the royalties they owe and which have not." It also noted that "late payments are common" and that "penalties for underpayment of royalties scarcely exist."

In its report released on January 21, the commission recommended that responsibility for monitoring royalty payments should be transferred from the U.S.G.S. to a new Minerals Management Service, which would be headed by a four-person board that would report directly to the Secretary of the Interior, a recommendation that Watt implemented before the report was made public. Three Washington, D.C.-based consulting firms have been hired to computerize the names of leaseholders and to cross-check information from them.

Among the commission's sixty recommendations are requirements that companies opening a new well notify the Interior Department by telegram no more than a day after production is begun; that Federal royalty managers compile production data and cross-check it with sales and royalty data; that royalty managers cross-check production reports; that companies making late payments or underpayments be charged the going interest rate; that leaseholders and operators file security plans for their sites "consistent with minimum government standards"; and that the department complete twenty-five "look-back" audits now under way no later than the end of 1983.

Some of the commission's other recommendations would require legislative action. It called for imposing fines of up to $10,000 a day on companies that willfully underpay royalties, "bounty payments" to private citizens who report il-

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legal activities to the authorities, and an increase in royalty payments on onshore leases from 12.5 percent to 16.67 percent.

The American Petroleum Institute, the lobbying arm of the oil industry, was not pleased with the commission's estimate of huge royalty losses. It issued a statement saying that it found "no evidence to support the magnitude of possible underpayments or illegal acts that have been headlined to date," and that the charges were based on "limited data." Nevertheless, A.P.I. said it would support most of the commission's recommendations.

It remains to be seen whether Congress and the Interior Department will implement the commission's most important recommendations. But at least a program has been outlined that would enable the Federal government to "count the change and cut the cards." □

LIBEL POLICIES FOR AUTHORS

Insuring Free Speech

EVE PELL

In a small but potentially important victory for freedom of speech, Viking Penguin announced on January 21 that it would provide free libel insurance for its authors. If other publishers follow Viking Penguin's lead, it may become less risky for writers to expose corporate misconduct, take on corruption in high places or even write an accurate biography of Frank Sinatra. For the provision of libel insurance is more than a technical change in writers' contracts with their publishers. It goes a long way toward removing a major obstacle to investigations of the rich and the powerful.

Today, the fear of libel suits is so strong among writers and publishers that it amounts to a prior restraint. The rich and the powerful, and those involved in shady dealings, know how to use the law to harass anyone who seeks to expose their activities.

Fear of libel suits led Richard Harris, a *New Yorker* staff writer for twenty-five years who has written eight books, to abandon a book he was working on about *New York Times* reporter Myron Farber and the trial of "Dr. X," a physician accused of poisoning five patients in a New Jersey hospital. Harris is not alone. Best-selling author Gay Talese says that if he were to write about Jackie Onassis, Frank Sinatra or any business tycoon, he would be inundated by subpoenas as soon as he began his research. Consequently, he does not even consider such projects.

As a result, writers are not investigating and informing the public about topics of considerable importance and interest. Experienced writers do not abandon projects because they think they might lose a libel suit; they abandon them because of the tremendous costs of merely defending against one. A defense can easily run up legal bills of $100,000 to $150,000. (Of course, if lawyers weren't so expensive, publishers might not be so averse to defending their writers against the merely frivolous suits. Lawyers typically charge $200 an hour even before they enter the courtroom.) Because the author must pay his publisher's legal expenses as well as his own, he could conceivably lose more on the suit than he earned on the book. Further, the strain and nuisance of being involved in a lawsuit wreak havoc with anyone's life.

While agents, authors and publishers disagree on the extent of the chilling effect of potential libel suits, they agree that caution is the watchword in publishing today. Publishers' lawyers frequently insist that controversial passages be removed from manuscripts; editors tone other passages down; authors censor themselves. "Publishers are wary. There's a definite tendency to avoid problems," says Michael Larson, a literary agent.

In the past few years, some writers have been trying to change the indemnity clause that is contained in the standard contract authors sign with most publishers. This clause states that the author must reimburse the publisher for expenses incurred in the course of defending or settling a lawsuit. The publisher is also permitted to decide unilaterally whether to settle a suit or not, and to negotiate the terms of the settlement.

In a recent case, Paul Bindrim, a California psychologist, sued author Gwen Davis Mitchell and her publisher, Doubleday, because, he claimed, a character in her novel *Touching* was based on him and the portrayal was libelous [see George Slaff, "In Libel, Fiction Is No Defense," *The Nation*, February 2, 1980]. Bindrim was awarded $75,000; Doubleday then sued its own author to recover the award and the legal fees. Mitchell and Doubleday eventually settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

Only book publishers place such an onerous burden on writers. When *Penthouse* was successfully sued by a former Miss Wyoming, who charged that a character in a story published in the magazine was modeled on her (the fictional Miss Wyoming had the power to levitate men by performing oral sex on them), the $26.5 million award—later reduced—was levied against the magazine, not the writer. Similarly, Carol Burnett, who successfully sued *The National Enquirer* for libel, collected from the paper, not the reporter. When Mike Wallace and *60 Minutes* are sued, CBS pays for the defense. Only in book publishing is the author held responsible for reimbursing the publisher, which these days may be part of a conglomerate.

Like most authors, Richard Harris considers this arrangement to be grossly unfair. Unlike most authors, however, he has battled the publishers and tried to organize writers. In 1973, Doubleday offered to publish a book Harris was writing. Harris then sent the publisher a letter in which he observed that "the publisher will not take any risk, even though he means to take most of the money." In the event of a libel or privacy-invasion suit, Harris went on, he could be wiped out financially. "On the other hand," he wrote, "the worst risk that the publisher faces is relatively small—a

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corporate loss that can be written off and that would have little effect on the overall operation. It would have no effect on your life or on the lives of your lawyers. . . . Somehow it seems all right for them to worry about the firm's insurance but not all right for me to worry about my existence." Doubleday would not modify its standard contract, and Harris refused Doubleday's offer.

No one seems certain why this conflict of interest between authors and publishers arose. After all, editors "vet" manuscripts for errors, libelous statements, invasions of privacy and the like, and the finished work is approved by the publishers' attorneys. But the legal burden still falls on the author. Larry Worrall, president of Media Professionals Insurance, a company that sells libel policies, explains the rationale behind the traditional arrangement: "The author is really an independent contractor, and publishers must rely on what the author says. Sometimes the publisher must be kept separate from the author."

The assumption seems to be that without the threat of economic catastrophe to keep them in line, authors would be sloppy or reckless. No one has contended, however, that having libel insurance makes *publishers* reckless or sloppy.

In recent years, authors' vulnerability has grown because of an enormous increase in lawsuits against them and because of the substantial amounts of money awarded by juries to successful claimants like Paul Bindrim. Moreover, publishing has changed from a rather genteel business conducted by small, privately owned firms to a mass-market industry where millions of dollars ride on a single title.

Literary agent Arthur Klebanoff says, "The book industry is experiencing in the last five years what everybody else is experiencing—a tremendous explosion of litigation. It isn't going to go away, and the fact that it happens doesn't mean that anybody necessarily did anything wrong—just that people do a lot of suing." Klebanoff suggests that it is the commercially successful authors who attract most legal actions. Best-selling authors like Alex Haley (*Roots*), Linda Goodman (*Sun Signs*), Gay Talese (*Thy Neighbor's Wife*) and Barbara Gordon (*I'm Dancing As Fast As I Can*) have all been hit with lawsuits in recent years.

Another cause of the rise in the number of libel actions is simply the tenor of the times. "There's a growing hostility in the law to publishers' interests in general," says Chad Milton of Media Professionals. "Maybe it's a backlash to Watergate and Woodstein. The press as an institution got kind of arrogant. Ordinary folks—the jurors of the world—and judges don't want publishers to be free to say what they want."

It is no wonder, then, that Viking Penguin's announcement gave writers new hope. The chain of events leading up to this announcement began when a New York author became curious. Stuart Speiser, author of *Lawsuit* and a successful lawyer whose practice involves many damage suits, was puzzled that insurance practices in book publishing differed so markedly from the practices that are standard in the rest of the business world. The usual arrangement is that an insurer extends coverage at no extra cost to everyone who is reasonably associated with the insured. Auto insurance policies, for example, cover not only the owner of the car but also others who drive it—children, spouse, friends. A newspaper's insurance covers its entire staff, including reporters. For a book publisher to deny its authors coverage under its libel insurance policy, Speiser contends, is comparable to a car owner excluding his children from his auto insurance.

Speiser speculates that years ago, some publishing executive came up with the idea of "unbundling" the usual ancillary coverage to cut out authors. He says that at least one major publisher already has language in its libel insurance contract that permits it to extend coverage to any author at its discretion.

Troubled by what he regarded as unfair treatment of authors, Speiser went to American International Group (A.I.G.), a large company that did not have any publishing clients. He asked the company whether it would write policies for publishers that would cover authors at no extra charge. A.I.G. agreed, and began drafting such a policy. Speiser then met with Irving Goodman, president of Viking

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Penguin, and explained his idea. Goodman was interested.

Meanwhile, perhaps spurred by the prospect of competition from A.I.G., Viking Penguin's present insurer, Employers Reinsurance, developed its own plans for author coverage. David Bohen, an assistant vice president of Employers Reinsurance Corporation, says that when a recent Authors Guild Foundation survey showed that writers earn an average of only $4,775 annually from published work, his company realized that they were simply too poor to pay legal fees and judgments. As a publishers' insurer, the company would lose money whenever an author was too poor to indemnify his publishers for the costs incurred in a lawsuit. And so Employers Reinsurance is now marketing a policy covering authors, and Bohen says that two publishers have already purchased it. Viking Penguin was the first to go public with the news because of Goodman's eagerness to be "the first on the block" with the new plan. Viking Penguin's policy insures authors for damages and legal costs in suits involving libel, slander, plagiarism, invasion of privacy, copyright infringement and unfair competition, with an annual limit of $3 million. The coverage has a $25,000 deductible provision, but the publisher assumes all of that amount except for $1,000, which the author must pay. Viking Penguin pays the full premium.

Goodman believes that this arrangement will benefit both author and publisher. "This program changes the idemnity clause, although the author's responsibility to be correct still remains," he says. "This makes us partners in what we publish. Insurance calms the nerves."

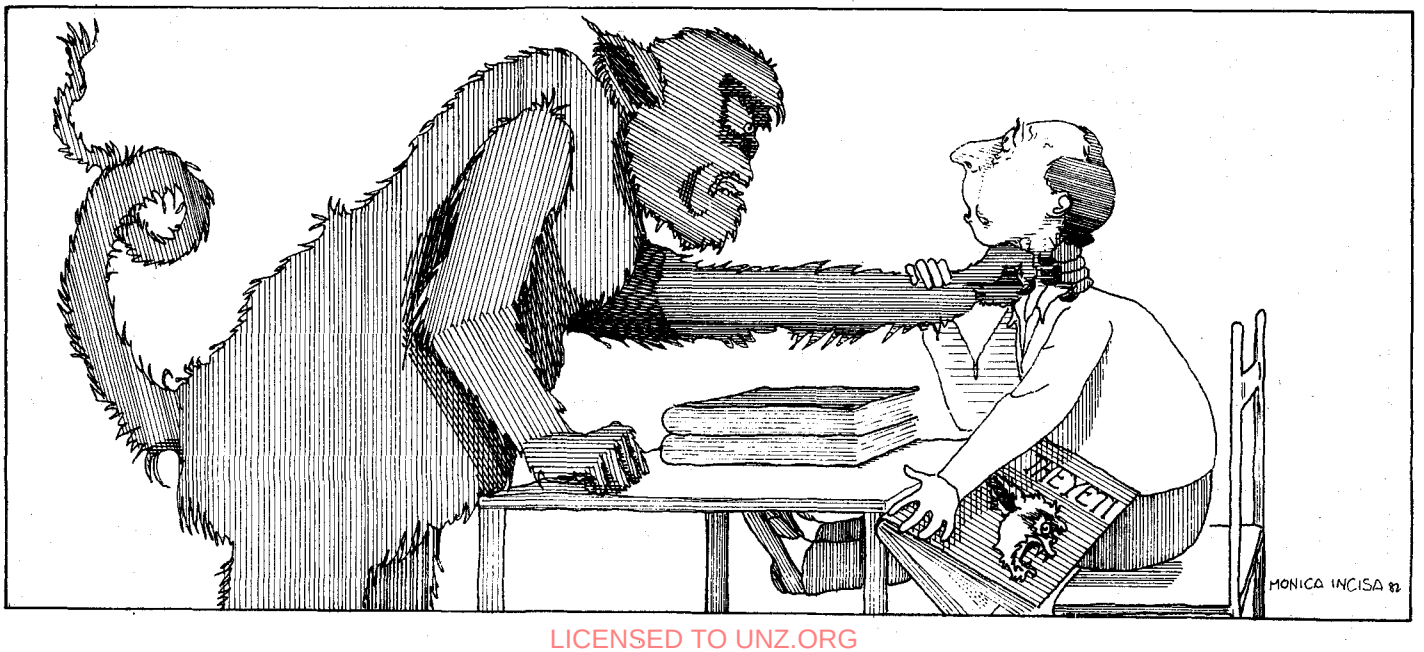
It remains to be seen whether other publishing houses will follow Goodman's lead. There are indications that some have decided to ignore the Viking Penguin precedent. One author who was negotiating a contract with Simon & Schuster shortly after the Viking Penguin decision asked for a similar provision and was told that Simon & Schuster's legal department had no intention of ever providing its authors with free libel insurance. The publisher even refused to add a clause to the contract stating that if the company agreed to provide libel insurance in the future, this particular book would be covered retroactively.

It also remains to be seen how Viking Penguin's coverage will actually work. When asked what Employers Reinsurance would do if the publisher wished to settle a lawsuit and the author refused, Bohen answered, "I don't know." And Viking Penguin's arrangement is still, after all, controlled by the publishers. It is not unreasonable to ask how well authors will fare, given the sometimes unhappy relationships between the two.

But at present there are few alternatives. Writers have been unable to organize group insurance plans on their own initiative, while an individual author can only purchase a libel insurance policy for a single book, which can be prohibitively expensive. Employers Reinsurance, for example, has charged premiums as low as $900 for a book, but the cost has exceeded $20,000 for a potential blockbuster. Some authors find that no company will insure them. "We receive some manuscripts from individual authors which are unacceptable to us for any number of reasons," says Roger Rudkin, counsel for Employers.

It is too early to say, however, if Viking Penguin's decision to provide libel insurance for its authors will prod the rest of the industry. So far, there has been no great rush by other publishers to follow its lead, or by authors to demand equivalent concessions. According to literary agent Anne Borchardt, "What this really means is that a publisher can't say, 'It can't be done.' They can say, 'We'll look into it.' But it takes time to get new insurance, although insurance can be retroactive."

Presumably, writers like Richard Harris and Gay Talese will press their publishers to match or better the Viking Penguin contract. And a publisher offering libel coverage might well lure a star away from one who doesn't. With luck, A.I.G. will enter the field with a competitive plan, and the free marketplace will work to the advantage of publishers, authors and the reading public alike. At least it can be said that something is being done to break the libel chill that now grips the publishing industry. □



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COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

The Untried Alternative To Prisons

MICHAEL SPECTER

Over the last decade the population of American prisons has undergone the most dramatic increase in the nation's history. As of January 1, 1981, almost 500,000 adults were incarcerated in Federal, state and local correctional facilities—a "city" of prisoners larger than Denver.

Scarcely a week passes without at least one judge having to decide whether or not to sentence a convicted offender to a dangerously overcrowded prison. While there is surprising agreement within the criminal justice community that we lock up too many people and that we keep them in prison far too long, the United States seems to be on the verge of embarking on the most extensive prison construction program in the history of the world.

Fear of crime, much like fear of military inferiority to the Soviet Union, has made many Americans willing to pay almost any price to enhance their personal safety. There is a widespread belief that our prisons are filled with violent people and that incarceration will lower the crime rates. Yet no more than one third of the people behind bars in the United States have been convicted of violent crimes, and more than 90 percent of the 13 million offenses in all categories recorded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its 1980 Uniform Crime Reports were classified as property crimes.

The rapid growth of the nation's prison population challenges the popular notion that rising crime rates are attributable to lenient judges. Yet, even though it is clear that locking up offenders—particularly nonviolent ones—does not reduce crime, incarceration is rapidly becoming our society's only answer to the problem. Last summer, the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime suggested that the Federal government provide $2 billion to the states in matching funds over the next four years for prison construction. At the same time, the Administration will sharply cut funding for programs that offer alternatives to incarceration. (Currently, new prisons are under construction or planned in forty-four states.)

"Far from building more prisons, we should begin to admit how badly they have failed us," said Federal Parole Commissioner Oliver Keller. "But the public has a mindset toward punishment, and it's so easy to put people away. We're always looking for that quick fix, but somehow we've got to convince people that punishment and prisons are not the same word only with different letters."

If anything can convince people of that, it will be an awareness of the stunning cost of incarceration. In a time of fiscal retrenchment, few things are more wasteful of the public's tax dollars than prisons. We spend more than $6 billion on corrections each year—up to 90 percent of that on incarceration. Even the most committed supporters of prisons admit that removing criminals from society is an expensive way to reduce crime. A single medium-security cell costs an average of $75,000 to build, assuming that the site has already been acquired and the financing obtained. It costs at least $10,000 to maintain that cell each year.

In 1976, the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand published a study that estimated the costs of confinement in New York City. Assuming a 6 percent rate of inflation, the study found that over a forty-year period more than $10 million must be spent to maintain *a single bed* at Rikers Island Detention Center. This figure includes inevitable costs, like those for health services, which are rarely mentioned by the advocates of prison construction.

Many criminologists believe that America will soon find itself without the resources to support its growing prison system. According to Dr. Gail Funke of the Institute for Economic and Policy Studies, $87 billion in capital construction funds and debt service would be required merely to double today's prison population—that is, to create facilities for another 175,000 convicts each year (assuming an average stay of two years). And inflation raises operating costs by up to $6 billion every year.

"With every new prison we put in the ground it gets tougher to be flexible," Funke said. "Once you build that $40 million structure you have to use it. This is one reason the states spend over five times as much on prisons as they do on probation and parole, although only one fifth of the offenders are incarcerated."

There are indications that voters are beginning to rebel against an anticrime policy that consists largely of building more prisons. Last November, voters in New York State defeated a $500 million prison bond issue, belying the notion that people are so desperately frightened of crime that they are willing to make any sacrifice to insure that all evildoers are locked up. Supporters of the bond issue blamed its defeat on the reluctance of upstate residents to pay for prison space to house criminals from New York City. Whatever the reason, the bond issue would have cost New Yorkers far more than its supporters claimed—a total of at least $1.5 billion if financing costs were included.

Crime *does* pose an increasing threat to the quality of people's lives, particularly in urban areas, but it is time to think more seriously about other types of sanctions. Alternatives to incarceration—halfway houses, parole, probation, extended work-release programs, restitution—have never gained wide acceptance in this country, largely because most people believe that they do not deter crime and that they enable criminals to avoid punishment. While it cannot be proved that these alternatives to prison reduce

Michael Specter is a writer based in New York City.

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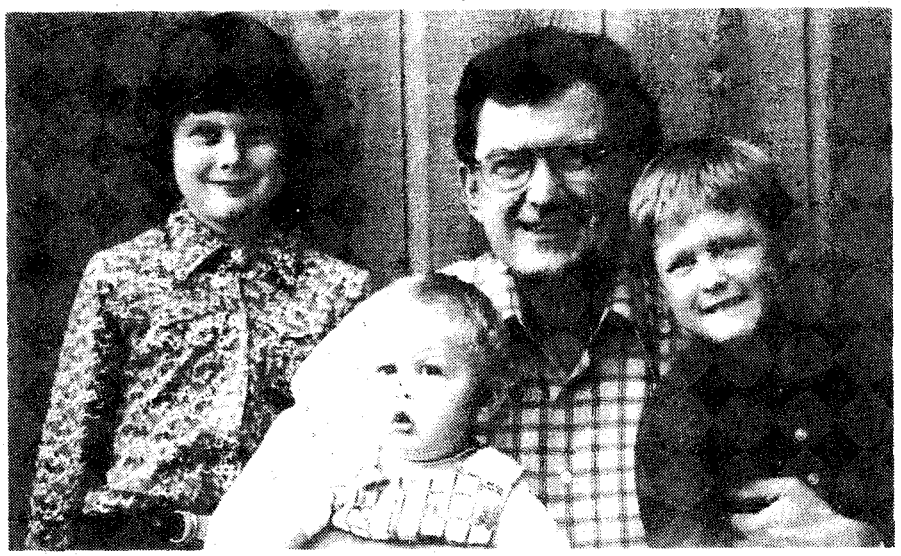

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recidivism, there is, on the other hand, no evidence that they increase it.

Moreover, these alternatives are for the most part ignored or badly misused by politicians who know that the easiest way to respond to a public clamor to "get tough on crime" is by sending more people to prison. As a consequence, alternative programs have never served the purpose for which they were conceived. Instead, their existence has meant that more and more people are dragged into the net of social control. After a decade of such programs, the prisons of this country are bulging. At present, only 6 percent of the nation's state and Federal prisoners live in work-release or halfway-house facilities.

There are several reasons why these alternatives have not reduced the load on prisons. First, community corrections programs, which are often designed to enable offenders to perform useful work while they are being punished, are judged against unrealistic expectations and held to impossible standards of success, which no prison could hope to meet. And, as Dr. Barry Krisberg of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency noted in a recent study for the National Academy of Sciences, the effectiveness of most of the alternative programs has not yet been properly measured.

"The community corrections folks tend to think that what they are delivering is an absolute good, and they are reluctant to subject it to any research," Krisberg said. "So all this money has gone into programs without any significant statistics to take to legislators who want to know exactly what they are getting for their dollars."

Our penal institutions are primarily a system for controlling the poor. Poor people and minorities are much more likely to be imprisoned for their crimes than are members of the white middle class. Almost nine times as many blacks are imprisoned as whites, and poor people receive much harsher sentences than people from higher income levels who have committed similar crimes. The 1978 "Profile of Jail Inmates" compiled by the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that more than 45 percent of all male inmates had annual incomes of under $3,000 prior to detention. The median income of male prisoners who had earned any was roughly a third of that of the general population—about $3,800 as compared with $11,700. The median income for all inmates—$3,714—was near the "poverty" level as defined by the Federal government.

By contrast, offenders involved in white-collar crime and drunken driving, which involve more money and more deaths, respectively, than any other categories of crime, are not punished as severely because many of them are middle class. In America, the need for vengeance and the ritual of punishment have historically focused on the lower classes. And because the criminal justice system is so thoroughly intertwined with the political system, the courts are selective in meting out punishment. For the most part, those least capable of rising above their poverty or ignorance are the ones who are punished. The underprivileged can react only with rage at the brutal circumstances of their captivity.

Many criminologists argue that America's chronic crime problems will not subside until the corrections systems have closer ties to individual communities. "We have to move toward programs that teach the offender to understand the human dimension of his crime," said Mark Umbreit, executive director of PACT Inc. (Prisoner and Community Together), a Midwestern organization that emphasizes restitution and alternative sanctions for certain felonies. "Ironically, this is a very traditional concept. It's personal accountability. You hurt someone and you have to make amends *to that person*. Instead of abstract punishment, we should learn to repair broken relationships."

Like Krisberg, Funke, M. Kay Harris (a visiting professor of criminology at Temple University) and others, Umbreit believes that the criminal justice system has simply filled up alternative programs with people who should never have been sentenced at all. And rather than making an effort to identify offenders who might benefit from alternatives to prison, judges continue to incarcerate automatically people who have been found guilty of certain categories of offenses.

In reaction, many community programs that were set up to reduce the prison population are turning away people who have committed only misdemeanors. In Elkhart, Indiana, PACT now allocates 90 percent of its places to felony offenders; six months ago there were very few felons in the program. The National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, a Washington, D.C.-based organization, will only work with criminals who otherwise would go to prison.

Perhaps the saddest thing about many Americans' reflexive faith in prisons is that true alternatives have never really been tried in this country. The people who are throwing money at the corrections problem are those who are unwilling to give community sanctions a chance before taking the extreme step of incarceration.

If the United States is not ready to put as much money into other sanctions as it puts into prisons, the public should at least stop blaming the failure of the parole system on the atrophied social service agencies designed to help offenders. Could probation programs that ask individual case workers to supervise hundreds of people do anything but fail? There are even parole officers who must communicate with their charges by postcard for lack of time. According to the Justice Department's report "Parole in the United States, 1979," the parole population increased by 5.2 percent during 1979. Nationwide, the average case load for parole officers was 71.1 offenders.

While it would be misleading to claim that alternative programs are less expensive than prisons, they deserve an honest chance before we decide conclusively that rehabilitation cannot work, that community programs are a waste of money and that public safety dictates that all criminals be segregated from society. Perhaps the forbidding costs of further prison construction will give us the opportunity to reappraise our corrections priorities. For now, however, it is clear that prisons are the one public housing program that the "truly needy" can expect to see continued. □

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Family Feud

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

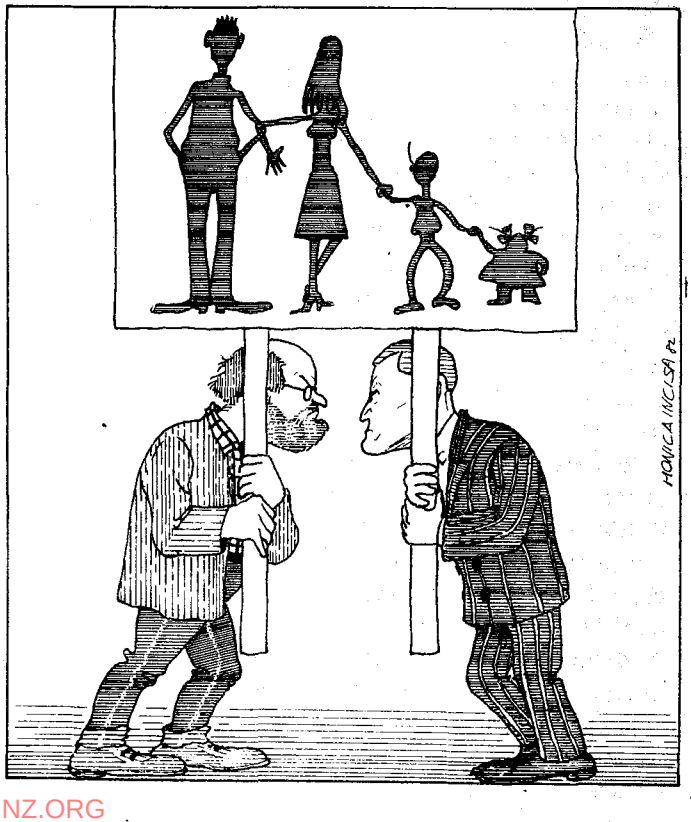
there is a contradiction between the right's programs, which are almost uniformly vicious, and its profamily ideology, which he takes to be benign and appealing—a sort of loss leader for the larger package of supply-side ruination. In this contradiction, he believes, lies a great opportunity for the left: The other side *says* they are profamily, but only *we*, with our broad program of humanistic reforms, can actually deliver. So why let the right have the franchise on family issues when we progressives are the only true profamily movement? The left should rally around his organization, Friends of Families (a pluralistic revision of his earlier Friends of the Family), and cash in on the profamily anxiety which so far only the right has tapped.

If there has been an overreaction to this simple proposal (the logic of which I will explore in a moment), it does not stem from an atavistic countercultural commitment to "smash the nuclear family." The left, including the part of it that is descended from the New Left of the 1960s, has been less than steadfast in support of the kinds of feminist and gay issues that might in any way be construed as "anti-family." Some of us can recall, for example, the first stirrings of "profamilyism" on the left, which occurred among the Marxist-Leninist sects that went forth in the early 1970s to organize the working class. This was a commendable aim, but unfortunately their conception of the working class owed more to *All in the Family* than to any firsthand experience. Feminism, gay liberation and (in the case of the Revolutionary Communist Party) oral sex were condemned as petty bourgeois decadence and an insult to proletarian morality. Unmarried members were urged to form single-surname households, cut their hair and eschew mind-alterants other than beer. None of these efforts had any appreciable effect on the politics of the working class (in part, I suspect, because its younger members tended to look askance at short-haired men who did not smoke dope). But the idea persisted that "real people" are cultural conservatives for whom the liberating themes of feminism, gay rights and the New Left could only be irrelevant if not threatening.

In some ways, Lerner's views are just a new variation on this post-1960s left-wing puritanism. He strongly recommends marriage, or at least "long-term commitments," and he has publicly attacked "promiscuity" in Falwellian tones. He would like the left to join the Christian right in its exorcism of TV sex, or what he calls "the media's manipulation of sexuality," and in his *Nation* article, the only meaning he can find for "sexual liberation" is—Goddess help us—"the continued exploitation of women." He has little to say about gay people, except to suggest that some of the more stable couples among them might deserve "family" status, and he justifies abortion on the ground that "husbands and wives must have full control over the number of children they bring into the world." But what makes Lerner's position so novel is that "The Family," as in Friends of Families, is not just a concession to conservative cultural tastes. It is the *reason* for social change and the organizing principle for a program of far-reaching reforms. And it is hard to get any friendlier than that.

All quarrels about gender and sexual liberation aside, the coherence of Lerner's proposal depends on whether an entire program of social democratic reforms can be presented as a means of strengthening, saving or uplifting the family. To run down his argument: Occupational stress and workplace alienation have to go because they seep home to the family, where they cause "small squabbles" and even "large quarrels." So too with inequality between the sexes, since "relationships in which there is an inequality of power . . . are inherently unstable and likely to collapse." Capital relocation is another menace because it causes the uprooted families to become "isolated and alienated." Ditto for "economic worries," for these cause male "frustration" that is "frequently vented in outbursts at their wives or their children." "A true family-support program," he tells us, "would call for full employment, socialized health care, affordable, community-controlled child care and wider availability of new housing and mortgage loans," not to mention "a restructuring of the economy to emphasize mutual support and cooperativeness." Socialism? No, just profamilyism.

Or is it? While I have no doubt that most of the good things Lerner proposes would make families happier insofar as they might make people in general happier, they cannot be counted on to foster the family stability he values so highly. Take the issue of economic equality for women. At the risk of downplaying romantic love, one of the mainstays



Barbara Ehrenreich is co-author, with Deirdre English, of For Her Own Good *(Anchor/Doubleday).*

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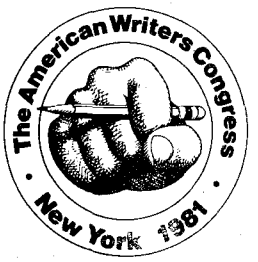

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of modern marriage has been the "family wage": the presumption that men are working to support a family and women are working for small change, a presumption reflected in the fact that women earn only 40 percent of what men do, hour for hour. If women were given equal pay, a major incentive for marriage would be taken away (for men too; historically, the more economically dependent women have been, the greater the pressures on men to marry and "settle down"). And, in case that sounds overly cynical, I could cite sociological studies showing that the likelihood of divorce rises as the wife's earnings increase. Thus the only principled position for a true "friend of the family" would be to demand that wage differentials by sex be maintained or—just to be on the safe side—increased.

The same consideration applies, of course, to socialized medicine and day care. The former would weaken women's dependence on their husband's fringe benefits, and the latter might encourage young mothers to stray—as profamily advocate Richard Nixon discerned some time ago.

Others in Lerner's list of reforms would have a dubious or even disruptive effect on the family. Should we, for example, so lightly discard "the fragmentation of work, the 'de-skilling' of the labor force and the erosion of working-class solidarity"? Without the first two, would many husbands still be willing to spend weekends around the house, compulsively trimming the lawn and plotting creative home improvements? As for working-class solidarity, what's to guarantee that it won't be celebrated in its traditional setting, the working-class bar, rather than on wholesome picnics staged by Lerner's "family-support networks"? In general, "fragmentation and isolation" might not be the unmitigated antifamily evils that Lerner imagines. Recall what happened to John Belushi's family in the movie *The Neighbors* when their exurban solitude was interrupted by the diabolically friendly couple next door. Surely, before advocating interfamily socializing, we should know how many divorces are instigated by some seductive "friend of the family."

Finally, there is the matter of housing. Lerner shows an appropriate bias toward home ownership, but if houses become cheaper to buy, there is no guarantee that rents will not also decline in time. It should be clear to everyone that lower rents do not belong on any list of profamily reforms. Nothing cements those long-term commitments to live together like the unavailability of studio apartments at anything less than $500 a month.

The point is that you cannot take the familiar list of liberal and left reforms—from socialized medicine to full employment—and try to pass them off as the ultimate profamily package. You can *try*, of course, but I do not think that Senators Roger Jepsen, Paul Laxalt and the other supporters of the Family Protection Act will be fooled. What is progressive is not necessarily profamily, and what is a prima-facie profamily measure—such as cutting off Legal Services Corporation funds for divorce—is not necessarily progressive.

The vacuousness of left-wing profamilyism is compounded by the demography of the situation. When the

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right talks about the family, everyone knows it means the traditional husband-wife-children unit, listed in order of their God-given authority. But this type of family—especially the version in which the husband is the only person employed outside the home—is no longer the only show in town. There are 9.1 million families headed by women in the United States (and this is the fastest growing kind of family in the country), as many as 2 million couples living together without benefit of marriage and 18.9 million people living alone (up 73 percent since 1970). All of them face the ravages of occupational stress, unemployment, lack of socialized medicine and "fragmentation and isolation," among other social evils, and it seems to me to be unfair to exclude them from progressive profamilyism. But then what would it mean to be profamily? To be properly ecumenical, Lerner might have to describe his position as "prohousehold," and Friends of Families might become "Friends of Living Units."

But just because Lerner's profamily program is an affront to common sense does not mean that it might not be, in some opportunistic way, good public relations. In his *Nation* article, Lerner says that "much of the success of the right in the last election was attributed to its ability to capitalize on so-called family issues." If it worked for them, why not for us? Well, chiefly because it didn't work for them. I don't know who did the attributing in Lerner's assertion, but most election analysts tell us that people voted against Jimmy Carter rather than for Ronald Reagan. And when right-wingers won in Congressional races, it was, in most cases, because they capitalized on the organizational strength of the antiabortion movement, and not, as Lerner coyly puts it, on "so-called family issues."

There is, of course, a profamily constituency out there. At least there are people who respond to the issues that the right has encoded as profamily, and it is important to be precise about what these are: opposition to abortion, to gay rights, to racial integration, to teen-age sexuality and to morally ambiguous books like *Catcher in the Rye*. The mistake of many people on the left—not just Lerner—has been to imagine that right-wing profamilyism arises from some deep and potentially anticapitalist and communitarian yearning—for, as he puts it, "a haven where love and commitment can take precedence over competition and struggle." Maybe there is a little of that worthy sentiment admixed in the support for such characters as Alfonse D'Amato, Jesse Helms, Jeremiah Denton and the rest, just as there was an appealing strain of anticommercialism in the support for Adolf Hitler.

But most of the impulses that propel people toward the right-wing profamily movement are nasty ones: misogyny, racism, sexual repressiveness and a punitive attitude toward young people. Feminists and leftists have no reason to berate themselves for failing to respond to these impulses and to guide them in a more kindly direction. We have our own potential constituency out there, and to judge from the polls showing overwhelming support for the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion rights, it is far larger than anything the profamily movement can muster.

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

The Writer's Social Responsibility

"I would like in my opening remarks to make a pre-emptive strike against the possibility of this panel becoming involved in a debate over whether a writer does *or* does not *have a social responsibility to fulfill. Every day we bear witness to how the language of the powerful justifies the populace in its most convenient assumptions of what is happening in this nation and trivializes the lives of the vast majority of people who do not have access to the channels of communication. And so at a time when loose talk is enshrined as enlightenment, when government and the economic interests behind it use language* against *people who must endure the consequences of their lives being reduced to 'expendable items' in a budget, debating whether or not a writer has any social responsibility is ludicrous.*

"Writers who make their work a public gesture, by that very act, must take responsibility for the possible effect what they say may have on others. Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has said:

> *A writer responds, with his or her total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, the writer registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in a changing society. Thus the writer will produce different types of work, sometimes contradictory in mood, sentiment, degree of optimism and even world view. For the writer lives in, and is shaped by history.*

"So the question for a writer, it seems to me, is not whether there is a responsibility to his or her potential audience, but rather what he or she has chosen to be responsible to and for. In other words, where is the battleground? Where is the battleground for each of you as writers? And in what terms do you define it for yourselves? And for those devil's advocates among us who would question the existence of a battleground for writers, I'd like to read from a poem by Amiri Baraka, entitled 'Jitterbugs'".

The imperfection of the world
is a burden, if you know it,
think about it, at all . . .
You can't escape
there's no where to go
They have made this star unsafe,
and this age, primitive,
though your mind is somewhere else
your ass ain't

—Wesley Brown, novelist,
American Writers Congress, October 9-12, 1981.

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Lerner does offer one earnest platitude that may be useful for those who missed the last twenty or so years of American radicalism. He observes that most people have personal problems of one sort or another that the left would be remiss to ignore. The mistake, and it is a grave one, is to imagine that all of the problems that imprison people in private anguish are susceptible to profamily solutions. Battered wives should be able to leave their husbands (and I am sure Lerner would agree) rather than having to wait around for the levels of occupational stress to subside. Spouses whose lives are depleted by sexual boredom ought to be able to consider alternatives to monogamy. Elderly people who are infantilized by their relatives may need, above all, to get away from them. Teen-agers whose parents deprive them of privacy and dignity need safe, nonfamily environments to turn to. And so on. To consign all these problems to Friends of Families' "family-support networks" and the therapeutic bazaar of "American Families Day" would be like sending one of Marilyn French's heroines off to Marriage Encounter. We need, as feminists have been saying for a long time, a supportive infrastructure of community—not necessarily family—institutions.

On one point Lerner and I agree: that it would be a mistake for the left to retreat into economism and cede all the "social issues," as the New Right calls them, to the likes of Phyllis Schlafly and Richard Viguerie. Yet I think the greatest danger of his proposal is not that it will be taken seriously but that it will be taken as an excuse to do just that—to back off from the sticky issues of gender and sexual liberation. If you can convince yourself that the greatest source of personal *angst* afflicting Americans is the "breakdown of the family," and that this in turn is brought on almost single-handedly by the malevolent workings of capitalism, then there is, indeed, no need to deal with other forms of oppression, like male domination and institutionalized homophobia. You could dispense with feminism (except for its narrowest construction as "equal rights") and subsume all noneconomic issues into a pious concern for "The Family." It is this temptation, I fear, that has helped make Lerner's proposal "one of the few live issues" at a time when we ought to have no shortage of more pressing issues to keep us busy.

Perhaps the lesson in all this (because there ought to be some redeeming lesson) has to do with how easy it is to lose our bearings in the face of a political solecism like the Moral Majority or a legislative indecency like the Family Protection Act. I think we need to have a little more confidence in our long and honorable tradition of political dissidence. American radicals and feminists, at best, share a vision of community that transcends family and race, and a vision of morality that transcends patriarchal "virtue." It is a vision that affirms individual desire and imagination because we believe they are not disruptive or selfish, but prefigurative of a happier world. And it is a vision that affirms our responsibility to the "sisters" and "brothers" we will never meet as well as to those we know. It's a strenuous vision and not easily boiled down to one-liners, but I would like to think it's worth holding on to—maybe even elevating to a family tradition. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 290*)

clear that the reason for the suggestion was that it was unnecessary to trouble Conant about a matter that could be handled in other ways: "In the event that certain members of the Research Center become subjects of subsequent investigation, it may then be desirable to secure their original efforts for inclusion in their files, but it does not appear that procuring the complete work of the Center is necessary." (Harvard Russian Research Center file, serial #100-360557-16.)

One month later, the *Harvard Crimson* of June 23, 1949, reported that Conant, speaking at a meeting of the Harvard Fund for Advanced Study and Research, had said that "as long as I am president of the University I can assure you there will be no policy of inquiring into the political views of members of the staff and no watching over their activities as citizens." *Sigmund Diamond*

FOR A FREER ISRAEL

Brooklyn, N.Y.

The open letter on civil liberties in Israel that appeared in all Israeli newspapers and was reprinted in the Letters column of *The Nation* ["'Haaretz' Declaration," Jan. 16] has generated an outpouring of letters to its signatories from readers of *The Nation* (as well as from hundreds of Israelis). The letter, signed by the Temporary Action Committee, expressed a desire to organize Israelis who are concerned about the direction of Israeli policy and who wish the nation to return to the ideals of political, racial, sexual and religious liberty and equality set forth in the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

A support group, the American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition (A.I.C.L.C.), has been organized in the United States, and the Temporary Action Committee has responded to expressions of interest from Israelis by organizing itself as Kol Koreh. With the support of American contributors, Kol Koreh is establishing a legal aid office in Jerusalem and is currently preparing test cases to bring before Israeli courts. The first cases will involve religious liberty, sexual equality, Palestinian rights and freedom of information. They will be supervised by a litigation committee chaired by Dean Amos Shapiro of Tel Aviv University Law School.

Both A.I.C.L.C. (a nonprofit organization incorporated in New York) and Kol Koreh are nonpartisan groups dedicated to the protection of the civil liberties of Israeli citizens and residents of Israeli-controlled territories. The initial organizers of A.I.C.L.C. include Nat Hentoff, Ellen Feingold, Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Jeremiah Gutman, David Carliner, Arthur Kobacker, George Slaff, Roger Herz and Rachel Eytan-Fishman. We welcome the participation of all and feel we can be particularly effective in providing a vehicle by which Americans too disenchanted with Israeli policies to join mainstream organizations can combine to support a more libertarian and egalitarian Israel. As Chaim Weizman wrote in his autobiography, "the very life-blood of a stable society is justice. . . . Our security will to a great extent depend not only on the armies and navies which we can create, but on the internal moral stability of the country."

Readers of *The Nation* who would like further information are invited to write to the coalition at 124 West 79th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024. *Philippa Strum*
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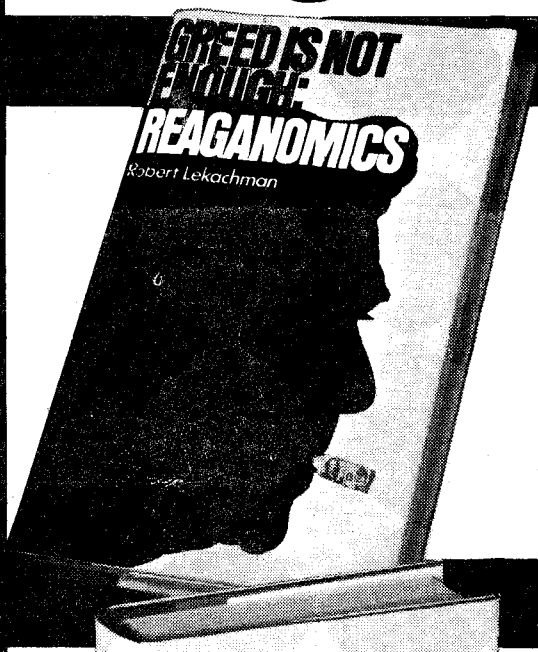

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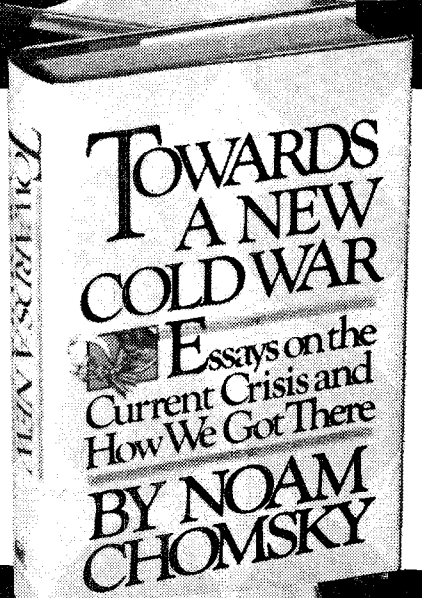

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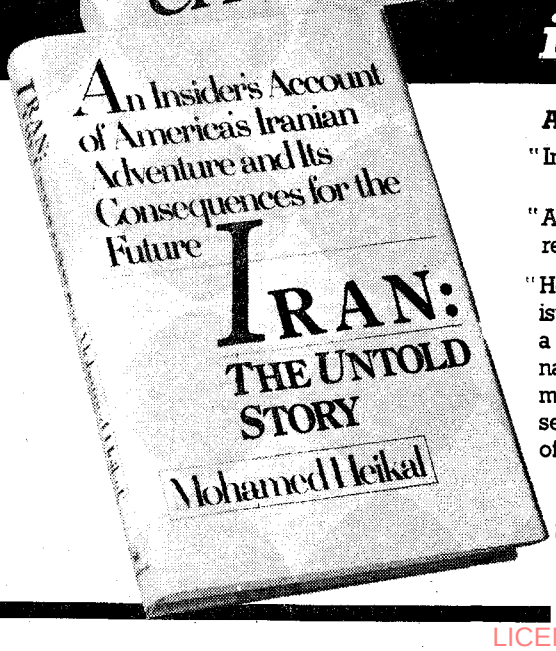
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The Joys of Giono

PETER MARIN

Mention Jean Giono's work to most American readers and they smile blankly; he is at this point probably the most significant modern French writer still unknown to us. Although he published more than sixty volumes of fiction, essays, poetry and plays during his lifetime, only a dozen or so of these have been translated into English. Most Americans who know his work first learned about it from an essay in Henry Miller's *Books in My Life*. In the 1930s, Viking published several of Giono's novels, but these have nearly always been impossible to find. I can still remember the particular secondhand bookstores and even the precise location on their shelves where I discovered each of his novels; even now, as I hold his books in my hands, I can still feel the thrill I experienced when I found them long ago.

All three of the books reissued by North Point Press were written early in Giono's career: *The Song of the World* (published in France as *Le chant du monde*) appeared in 1929, *Blue Boy* (*Jean le bleu*) in 1932 and *Joy of Man's Desiring* (*Que ma joie demeure*) in 1935.* They provide excellent examples of the early (and perhaps best) stage of Giono's career: the period between the two world wars, when his work was marked by a combination of lyricism, romanticism and realism to form a fiction imbued with hope and full of praise for human possibility and the natural world.

Giono was born in Manosque in 1895 and he died in 1970. Although his work was well known in French literary circles, he shunned intellectual and literary life, rarely leaving Manosque. "The present," he once wrote, "disgusts me, even to describe. It is sufficient merely to endure it." The subject matter of his work reflects that attitude; with few exceptions, the books are set in rural villages or valleys, often in the past. Throughout his career, Giono spoke continuously for private and rural values so alien to the urbanized and institutionalized modern world: solitude, passion, integrity, independence of judgment and taste, and a loving relation to nature.

One cannot quite call Giono a nature poet, but like Lawrence or Tolstoy or Hardy, to whose work his bears certain similarities, Giono locates his deepest truths, especially those about human behavior, in nature; he measures the behavior of men and women *through* nature, bringing to bear on the world of history a set of standards and a reverence apparently grounded in the reality of natural life. Everywhere in Giono one can feel the spiritual sustaining presence of the physical world.

This is especially true of *The Song of the World*, the earliest of the three novels North Point has reissued. It is the story of a bitter and fatal peasant feud over a woman. The central character, a woodsman named Antonio, comes to the aid of a troubled friend and journeys several days into unfamiliar territory in search of his friend's missing son. He is drawn into a struggle between the son and Maudru, the unofficial ruler of the territory. The subject of the book is not really the feud, or even the characters involved in it. It is, rather, the reality they inhabit: a world which seems as alive, almost as conscious, as the characters themselves. Here is the opening of the second part of the novel:

> Winter in the Rebeillard region was always a sparkling season. Every night the snow fell, thick and heavy. In the halo of the street-lamps, Antonio had sometimes seen it fall straight as a shower. The towns, villages and farmsteads of Rebeillard slept, muffled in those thick, silent nights. Now and again all the beams in a village would creak, people would awake, and thick clouds would skim the ground with their flapping wings, rustling along the forests. But dawn always rose in a great stretch of cloudless sky, swept by a gusty north wind. The sun, scarcely emerging from the horizon and crushed under the weight of relentless azure, would stream all over the frozen snow; the most stunted shrub would blaze up like a flaming heart. In the solid, metallic forest, the wind could not stir a single bough; it merely sprinkled a glittering spray over the dazzling whiteness. Bright, sparkling dust spread over the country.

This is Giono's subject, his theme, his primary character: the natural world. The people who inhabit the book are simply forms for, expressions of, that world. D.H. Lawrence once said that he hoped in his work to present character as a kind of weather, as a function of nature rather than will. Giono comes closer to doing that than Lawrence ever did. Reading him, one is reminded of certain Laurentian descriptions of nature: the courtyard scene, for instance, in *The Man Who Died*. But however important it is for him, nature remains a background for Lawrence. For Giono it is perpetually present —not only around but also *in* his characters. They are both surrounded and inhabited by a world that exists beyond history, even *before* history. Several passages in Giono remind one of Hugo's description of the Brittany forests in *Ninety-Three*: an impenetrable and pre-Adamite world. Here roads and authority vanish; life and speech are enclosed by silence; one feels as if human life had taken a step backward to its beginnings or, rather, as if the beginnings of life and the whole slow train of natural change were fully present in every human gesture Giono describes.

Blue Boy, a more intimate and a quieter work, is one of Giono's two patently autobiographical books (the other is *Morte D'un Personage*, published in 1949 and as yet not translated into English). It is about Giono's childhood and the village in which he grew up, and it consists, for the most part, of a series of vignettes of rural life. The most famous of these, the story of a cuckolded baker, was later made into a film, *The Baker's Wife*. The book does not have the grandeur or scope of, say, *Joy of Man's Desiring*. It is more constrained, and yet, perhaps because of that, Giono seems more at home here than usual with the ordinary social world. People and places are depicted with more clarity and truth than in his consciously mythical work. Some things

**The Song of the World.* Translated by H. Fluchère and G. Myers. 320 pp. $9.50. *Blue Boy.* Translated by Katherine Allen Clarke. 256 pp. $8.50. *Joy of Man's Desiring.* Translated by Katherine Allen Clarke. 472 pp. $10. Forthcoming, *The Horseman on the Roof.* Translated by Jonathan Griffin. All published by North Point Press.

Peter Marin is currently at work on a book, Conscience and the Common Good.

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stand out with startling vividness: the wedding of a local rake; the madness of a deranged woman; the smells and sounds of courtyard life; the orderly beauty of a bare whitewashed room.

Perhaps the most moving sections in *Blue Boy* are those in which Giono writes about his father, a tender and humane man from whom he apparently learned his values. What one sees at work here is the passage of human seriousness from one generation to another—not the tense conflict between generations to which we are accustomed in literature but a sweet transmission of feeling, a tradition of deepened sensibility which, along with nature itself, is what Giono holds dear. Here is one of the passages about his father:

> He broke nothing, tore nothing in me, stifled nothing, effaced nothing with his moistened finger. With the prescience of an insect he gave the remedies to the little larva that I was; one day this, the next day that; he weighted me with plants, trees, earth, men, hills, women, grief, goodness, pride, all these as remedies, all these as provision, in prevision of what might be a running sore, but which, thanks to him, became an immense sun within me.

What we are shown in *Blue Boy* is the anchoring of a child in life, an example of the ways in which some men and women become so responsive to life, so filled with love for it, that each of their words seems somehow to contain and to be grounded in whatever it is they have loved. *Blue Boy* is as different from Sartre's *The Words* as a book can be, but I nonetheless found myself thinking of Sartre while reading Giono. What strikes me are the profound differences (and occasional similarities) in the ways their worlds were visited upon them early in life. Giono is far less analytic than Sartre; he locates the impulse to write closer to the heart than to the psyche, and he speaks out of gratitude rather than from the need for self-defense or self-creation (Kropotkin's description of morality as "an overflow of vitality" might well apply to Giono). But different as they are, the two autobiographical books seem somehow to belong together, and certainly—though there is little said explicitly in *Blue Boy* about writing—one can learn more from them about the relationship of feeling to literature, or of the heart to language, than from a shelf of textbooks on the uses of literature.

Joy of Man's Desiring is, for most of Giono's admirers, the best of his books, or at least the best of those translated into English, and, it seems to me, one of the twentieth century's greatest and wisest novels. The central character is Bobi, a mysterious circus performer who appears in a small mountain community and brings an anarchist vision of freedom, joy and cooperation into the closed lives of its inhabitants. Here too, nature plays an important role, but these peasant characters, unlike those in *The Song of the World*, are already distinct from, and at odds with, their surroundings. They are more modern, more historical, and it is their lives, already divorced from nature, that form the human arena into which Bobi brings his dream of a lovelier and more natural world.

Bobi reveals to these men and women a world of human possibility. He introduces cooperative joy and pleasure as part of, and counterpart to, work; he gives them a sense of freedom, a sense of their ability to create on their own terms, in tune with their own natures. Where the book is weak, perhaps, is in Giono's inability (or, more likely, his unwillingness) to see his characters' lives in a historical context, as part of the economic and political realities around them. He presents them almost as if they were unaffected by a larger world, but there is a good reason for that. It allows him to spell out in glorious detail the nature of human yearning—what we *might* be if we made use of what is best in ourselves.

Actually, more than in his other work, Giono holds himself to account here. *Joy of Man's Desiring* is both utopian *and* tragic, for at the same time that Giono delineates the nature and extent of human yearning, he acknowledges the apparent impossibility of giving full and permanent form to what we know through imagination to be possible. He is able to show—perhaps more movingly than anyone since Tolstoy—that the heart, in the purity of its yearning, belongs to the world of sky, stone and tree. But he also understands how distant we are from that world and how difficult it is to make a lasting home for the flesh within it. What marks human life for Giono, in this book, is the *mutability* of joy, its attendant sweetness and woe; it is for him a momentary condition, a window that opens for a moment on a landscape that, though it surrounds us, remains uninhabited, in spite of our yearning.

Taken together, as I have said, these three books give one an accurate sense of Giono's early work. But it would be a mistake to view them as representative of what he wrote or thought in the decades that followed. Later, Giono began to experiment with form. His last novels are generally set in a distant and idealized past; his major characters are increasingly solitary and more obviously "heroic"; and Giono himself becomes more self-consciously committed to mythic themes and even less at ease with the modern world than he was in these early books. Many critics—especially those on the French intellectual left—have taken him to task for the explicit and implicit political attitudes in his books. And Giono himself eventually became controversial. He was jailed twice: once at the start of World War II because of his pacifist views, and again at the war's end for his supposed collaboration with the Germans. There does not seem to be much to this second charge. While it *is* true that during the war Giono occasionally published pieces in a journal approved by the occupying forces, in all likelihood it was his coldness toward the Resistance, and his consistent refusal to engage himself in it, that generated the charges against him. And one must note, in fairness, that there were reports after the war that Giono had made his farm available as a refuge to Jews.

All of this aside, it is still not difficult to see why Giono's work might disturb those with a more politicized sense of social needs and programs. His privatism, his contempt for anything modern or urban, his belief in the solitary hero, his rejection of formal left-wing ideology—all this can be viewed, from certain angles, as conservative, even reactionary. Throughout Giono's career, he was unable to find any party, program or system of ideas he felt worthy of his allegiance; his anarchist attitudes parallel the peasant attitudes that have often fueled and confounded modern revolutions.

But there remains, at the heart of Giono's work, something that seems more restorative and perhaps more radical than the attitudes of many of his critics. However much of a romantic Giono seems, he is always a realist about the resources of the human heart, and he understands—even when he seems to pine for a past that may never have existed—what is necessary for the

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future. One reads him to be reminded of the fundamental truths which are too often left behind by ideology: the importance of generosity, the necessary intensity of passion and the possibility of a human relation to the world that will combine desire, love and gratitude. It is no more fashionable to speak of such things now than it was when Giono wrote these three books, but what keeps his work alive is the fact that such qualities remain, always, beneath and beyond all politics, the touchstones of decent life. □

Down the Pickwick Path

MICHAEL MALONE

WATER MUSIC. *By T. Coraghessan Boyle. Atlantic-Little, Brown. 437 pp. $15.95.*

The tumbling exuberance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century picaresque novels has lured many a modern novelist down the Pickwick path: John Barth's *The Sot Weed Factor* and Erica Jong's *Fanny* are two; T. Coraghessan Boyle's *Water Music* is one of the best. So vital are Boyle's troupe of strolling players, so capacious his invention, so rich his evocation of a world, that the book runs away from the author's efforts to hamper its progress by building turnstiles of self-conscious mockery at every turn of his wonderfully crowded road.

Water Music interlaces the adventures of lusty London rogue Ned Rise—like Tom Jones, born to be hanged—with those of the lofty explorer Mungo Park, whose passion is to take the virginity of the latest geographic maidenhead, interior Africa. In an Apologia, Boyle warns us that "where historical fact proved a barrier to the exigencies of invention," he has given truth the slip—exactly as he should; fact is no excuse for fiction. Besides, as his own Lord Twit remarks, "What is history, pray tell, if not a fiction?" In fact, the historical Mungo Park was a monumentally handsome Scottish surgeon sent by Britain's African Association to explore the course of the Niger River. In 1795, at 24, he did just that: wandering through inconceivable hardships over 1,500 miles of West Africa's Senegal Basin, escaping after four months the captivity of "the merciless Moors" and making his way, fevered and on foot, back to the coast, and so to England and into history as the author of *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa.*

On a second expedition, in 1805, Park was attacked by natives at the rapids of Boussa and presumably drowned. In Boyle's fiction, Mungo Park is all that. He is also the stoic-heroic penetrator of countries he never fathoms, even as he fords their rivers and suffers their tortures with a Kipling upper lip. He thinks like a national anthem; his pompous record of the expedition is dismissed by his "faithful factotum" as "the purest of bullshit." But in Park's soul is the siren song of water music, calling him to mystery: "the Niger rushing, falling, heaving toward its hidden mouth, toward the sea." Serving as Sam Weller to this intrepid idealist are first, K. O. Johnson, Mandingo former slave and man of letters, who acquires food by trading random couplets of Pope's. And second, Ned Rise, former porno entrepreneur and purveyor of fake caviar called Chichikov's Choice.

It is not fact but facetiousness that proves the only (and not unscalable) barrier to Boyle's brimming fiction. In the same Apologia, he boasts, "I have been deliberately anachronistic," and perhaps his Brechtian motive is to insist on our alienation from the wonderful impossibilities of the fictions *Water Music* mimics so well. These anachronisms are not the insouciant slips of the pen of Shakespeare's sort but vigorous slaps in the face: chapter titles like "Give Me Some Men Who Are Stout-Hearted Men" and "Not Twist, Not Copperfield." Small talk like "Sorry about that" and "It's no picnic, life on the Sahel, let's face it"—no picnic even for a witch doctor who's "got his mojo working." They are there like the angel's sword to keep us from trying to get back into the garden of an innocent read. Interrupting his narrative with a series of "You Are There" newsreels, Boyle pans Europe to remind us of such gossip as Beethoven's "wowing them in Vienna" or Wordsworth's having "been in and out of France and Annette Vallron." He creates a beautifully

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Hogarthean scene and then peeks around the corner of the canvas to say, "Hogarth would have loved it."

Such argot as "You done blowed it now" is especially unsettling when juxtaposed with the Latinate multiloquence for which Boyle has a sweet tooth; when "lightning tesselates the sky" and "remugient beasts" stalk "a fuliginous procession," we are told, "but hey, this is Africa, man." Any writer with the skill to make us see the gin swillers at the Pig & Pox Tavern, the "silver salmon cakewalking up the falls" in the Borderlands, the Africa of mud walls, sandstorms and tamarind, of saker falcons tearing at their meal in the tent of Fatima, 400-pound Moorish queen, idol of a bone-thin society, any writer with the gift to compare Milton's eyes to "bluejays scrabbling in the snow," has the right (and responsibility) to expect us to assume he is doing exactly what he intends.

And indeed, this wry pummeling of the past, historical and fictional, to pull it off its clay pedestal was central to Boyle's earlier *Descent of Man*, a remarkably innovative collection of short stories, in one of which Idi Amin hosts the Second International Dada Fair. In another, "Heart of a Champion," Lassie joins a coyote lover in chewing up her young master, Timmy. A more recent Boyle story retells Gogol's "The Overcoat," setting it in today's Russia and stripping it to an all-too-true realism. No ghost haunts the cruel Inspector and moves his heart by guilt to pity nowadays.

Bleak surrender to life's trouncing is antithetical to picaresque comedy, in which Tom must always be cut from the noose and wed to Sophy. Boyle's characters know this and insist on resurrection, despite his telling them and us, "Just when things seem blackest, they get blacker still." His inimitable walk-on parts, abandoned in London, walk back on in Africa. Improbable coincidence flourishes happily, and life demands more life. Last seen in the jaws of a crocodile, Johnson is found eight years later reading Dryden in his Dindikoo wattle hut. Ned Rise rises again and again, out of a brutal childhood of beggary and mutilation, out of the icy Thames, out from under the scaffold of the doctor who has bought his corpse from the hangman. Robbed, beaten, shot, drafted, diseased, Ned rises even from the rapids at Boussa, sole survivor of Park's last, disastrous expedition. But in *Water Music* Ned never finds again his Fanny Brunch, "fresh from the creamery with butter in her smile." Fanny drowns herself. Why? "It was the nineteenth century. What else was a heroine to do but make her way to the river?" Yet so strong is the current of his tradition, so rich the magic of Boyle's own creativity, that—in vain—we keep waiting for Fanny (of course pursued by the Moorish villain) to stumble into the pygmy village where Ned lives in holy retirement from the brilliant and dreadful world his author made. □

No Safe Dose

McKINLEY C. OLSON

RADIATION AND HUMAN HEALTH. *By John W. Gofman, M.D. Sierra Club Books. 853 pp. $29.95.*

I once wrote a book about nuclear power that I wanted to call *The Cancer Connection*. But my editors said no. Cancer doesn't sell. It frightens people.

No wonder. Cancer is a formidable disease. It attacks two out of every three families in this country. By the time all the statistics are in, they are expected to show that 400,000 Americans died from cancer in 1981.

Which brings me to John Gofman, who, with a profound faith in the American people and the democratic process, has written a devastating book about the dangers and the implications of low-level radiation. He describes his book as "a comprehensive investigation of the evidence relating low-level radiation to cancer and other diseases." This is not an esoteric excursion. This is a profound, clearly written, practical book by a renowned physicist, physician and humanitarian.

We know that low-level ionizing radiation has terrific energy. We know that it can tear apart the structure of an atom, that it can cripple human cells, that it can damage and kill human genes and chromosomes. We know that low-level radiation causes cancer and leukemia, that it causes birth defects and genetic defects, that it contributes to heart disease.

We know all this, but most of the official studies of low-level radiation have been orchestrated to minimize these dangers. Our government has played a leading role in the effort to whitewash any disturbing news in this area for the obvious reason that it advocates and sponsors the development of nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants.

When it comes to health care, the current lack of understanding, coupled with a mania for the use of radioactive devices and procedures, have obscured the serious questions about the risks and the benefits of employing such devices in medicine and dentistry. One thing has become clear, however: the government's standards for what is "safe" or "permissible" (words that have no validity, as Gofman's book demonstrates) keep going down as we learn more about low-level radiation and the damage it can do.

In *Radiation and Human Health*, Gofman takes the layman step by step on a journey designed to "demystify a whole field of science." Thus, we are able to take a good look at different forms of radioactive energy; at the origins of cancer; at external and internal sources of radiation, and how they attack human cells to cause cancer and leukemia; at the difference between exposing the whole body and exposing specific organs to radioactive doses; at the production and the implication of the radioactive elements involved in the nuclear power process; at background, or natural, radiation and its dangers; at radiation from television, X-rays and materials used in the building trades; and at the genetic and chromosomal effects of ionizing radiation.

Through all this, Gofman explains what our major concerns should be with respect to the radiation in our lives. He lays out the facts, but most important, he shows us what to do with them. That's what I meant when I said that Gofman has faith in democracy and the American people. He believes that people who have access to accurate information will make the right decisions.

This is a book, then, that deals with a subject that every alert parent should know more about. It should be of immense importance to everyone in the health-care field; and it should also find its way into the hands of teachers and journalists, lawyers and engineers, as

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well as people who work with or live near radioactive materials. Every public library and every school should own a copy.

Most important, *Radiation and Human Health* can be understood by "anyone who can understand miles per gallon, dollars per pound, or 18 percent interest on your unpaid balance," as Gofman says. He shows us how to calculate the risks we run when we're exposed to various doses of low-level radiation. Until recently, it has been possible for some people to dismiss or ignore the dangers of low-level radiation because of the difficulty of showing an obvious link between radiation exposure and a cancer that may not appear until ten to thirty years after that exposure. But there is now enough evidence to establish firm links between low-level radiation and disease. Gofman demonstrates that exposure to radiation is cumulative, meaning that exposure to low doses over a long period of time can do as much damage as if all those exposures were delivered at one time.

Gofman's findings with respect to the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings are especially instructive. He notes that the percentage of cancer deaths was appreciably higher—per unit of exposure—for those who received a *low* average dose of radiation than for those who received a *high* average dose.

His examination of the incidence of defective brain development among children who were in their mothers' wombs when the bombs fell is equally chilling. The evidence prompts him to suggest that pregnant women try to avoid medical or occupational radiation, especially during the first trimester, when the brain is developing.

In the case of medical and dental radiation, Gofman calls for balance and restraint. He says we "should always be more reluctant to perform X-rays on [children] than on adults. On the other hand," he cautions, "we must remember that the diseases or problems of diagnosis that bring physicians to prescribe X-ray procedures are probably more serious for children than for adults. It would be tragic if an acute problem with a 50/50 chance of leading to a child's death, unless diagnosed accurately, were left undiagnosed because a parent refused to permit an X-ray examination that would result in a one percent risk of a later cancer."

In addition to the 130 million Americans who are X-rayed each year, hundreds of thousands of workers either handle radioactive materials or are exposed to them on the job. Many of these workers are unaware of the dangers they may face. To some extent, the government and industry are responsible for this ignorance because they have fostered the misguided notion that there are permissible doses of radiation. Gofman destroys this myth with a table showing that 248 out of every 1,000 workers—at an average of 25—who receive a permissible dose of radiation for ten years will die a premature death from cancer.

There are also many people in government and industry who insist that there is a "threshold" below which radiation from nuclear power is "safe". Gofman shows us that the dosage that the Federal government regarded as safe until 1980 would cause more than 160,000 cancer deaths each year if every American were to receive this "safe" dose from nuclear facilities.

Fortunately for all of us, John Gofman's warnings are delivered by someone with the sorts of professional credentials that make him difficult to discount. A physician with a doctorate in nuclear-physical chemistry, Gofman has had a long and distinguished career. He isolated the first workable quantities of plutonium for the Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bombs. He has also earned numerous prizes and awards for his research on heart disease. He founded the biomedical research division of the Lawrence Livermore Radiation Laboratory, which conducted extensive studies on cancer, chromosomes, radiation and human health. In addition, Gofman is a prolific writer; he is the author or co-author of six books, among them *Poisoned Power* (with Dr. Arthur R. Tamplin, a biophysicist), one of the first books to publicize the dangers of nuclear power, and *Irrevy—An Irreverent, Illustrated View of Nuclear Power.*

And now we have *Radiation and Human Health.* I hope it finds the wide readership it deserves, because like Gofman, I have faith that if enough Americans read this book, the truth will out, and thousands upon thousands of lives will be spared. □

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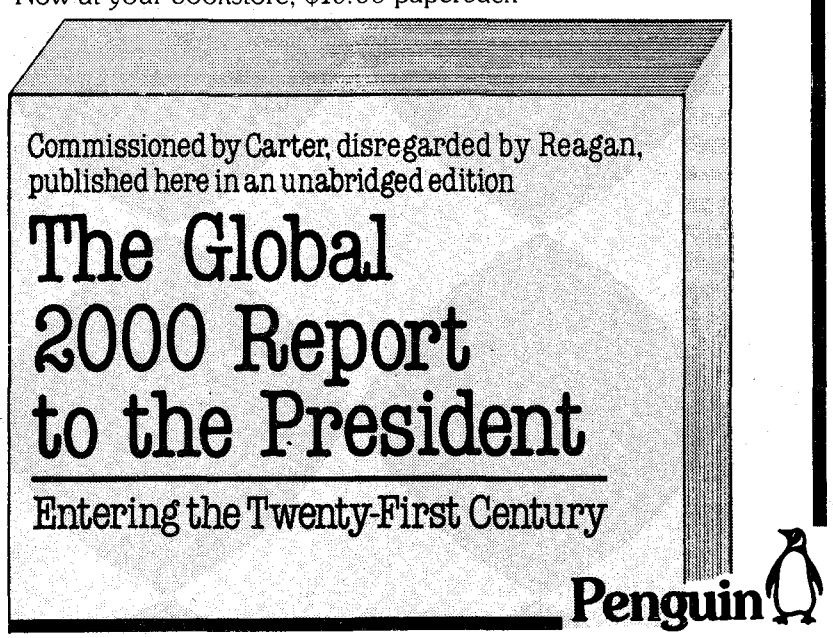
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Radical Ministry

JASON BERRY

AGAINST THE GRAIN: Southern Radicals and Prophets, 1929-1959. *By Anthony Dunbar. University of Virginia Press. 306 pp. $16.95.*

The melding of religion and politics inevitably raises emotional temperatures. The current tide of right-wing fundamentalism evokes bitter memories of McCarthy (who had the support of Georgetown University's Father Edmund Walsh) and of Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic radio broadcasts of the 1930s. But as Jerry Falwell is so fond of pointing out, ministers like Martin Luther King Jr. led the civil rights movement. How then does one distinguish between these conflicting moral visions?

Throughout this century, religious activists have separated into two broad camps. In one, social justice (fueled by an apostolic vision of alleviating poverty) has been the goal. The civil rights movement, led by ministers like King, Andrew Young and Fred Shuttlesworth, constitutes the major mid-century expression of religious radicalism.

The other camp is the one we hear more about today. Richard Hofstader's famous essay *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* prefigured the nature of current right-wing fundamentalism.

> In the paranoid style, as I conceive it, the feeling of persecution is central, and it is indeed systematized in grandiose theories of conspiracy . . . the [political] spokesman of the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life, whose fate affects not himself alone, but millions of others.

The Moral Majority's attacks on homosexuality, extramarital sex and abortion are central examples of the paranoid style.

For years, our sense of a tradition of Southern radicalism, religious or otherwise, has been confined to what we know of late 1890s populism (brilliantly treated in Lawrence Goodwyn's *Democratic Promise*) and to our reading in the growing library of contemporary civil rights history.

And yet there *was* a tradition of white radical religious activism in the South as early as the 1920s, but historical treatments of it have been rare. There have been issues of *Southern Exposure* magazine devoted to this period, but not until Anthony Dunbar's new book, *Against the Grain*, have we seen the depth of this tradition. Dunbar offers profiles of a handful of activists who fanned out through the South's poorest areas; these were people whose radical visions grew out of their educations as ministers.

At the same time that John Crowe Ransom and the Agrarians were mourning the passing of the old South, young Howard Kester was formulating a social gospel to justify and bolster the organizing of fieldworkers and miners. Quotations from Kester's writings, such as this letter to his wife, indicate the extent of his evangelical zeal for reform:

> I see all the sorrow, all the pain, all the suffering. I look past the superficial lives of countless men and women and see in their heart of hearts a deep flowing desire for reality; I look out and see men, rich men, honorable men, capable men leaning over tables planning wrack and ruin to countless thousands yet unborn; I look out and see boys and girls walking leisurely down the road that leads to disaster and ruin; I see old men and women broken in the wheels of industry . . . I see misery and poverty in countless cities and hear the cry of little children for bread, and I grow weary and downcast.

Some of the projects Kester, his wife, Don West, Jim Dombrowski and others took on were nothing short of heroic. Their most successful venture was undoubtedly the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Rebuffed by conservative A.F.L. leaders in Washington, Kester and his allies in the tenant farmers' union forged a shaky alliance with sympathetic sorts such as Reinhold Neibuhr and then, more usefully, with Communist Party organizers. But, as Dunbar describes, to be openly affiliated with the Communists in the South in the 1930s was both politically and physically dangerous. Tensions between the union and party organizers grew to the point where "pressures . . . upon the southern movement, originating with

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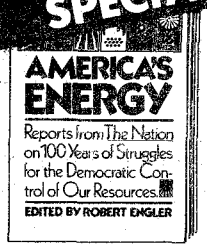
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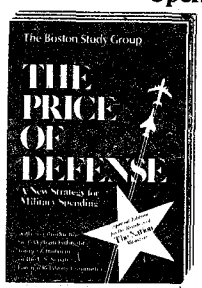

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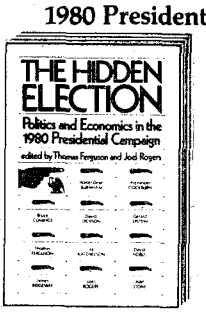
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party tacticians in New York and Chicago, generated a feeling of hostility among activists who otherwise worked well together. The overall result was the fracturing of the radical movement throughout the region."

In some ways the split prefigured the internecine struggles among civil rights activists in the South during the next generation. But the radical prophets of the 1930s had also scattered seeds of dissent that grew into full-fledged movements by the 1960s. By the mid-1930s, the S.T.F.U. had 50,000 members, blacks and whites. In their deep commitment to biracial solidarity, Kester, Dombrowski and others helped to establish the direction that mainstream movement leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Andrew Young were to follow.

Despite the fact that most of the people described in Dunbar's book are now dead, their legacy remains, even if it is temporarily overshadowed by the fundamentalist mania in the public eye. The Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, a center for labor organizing, the Center for Southern Studies in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, Mississippi's Delta Ministry and the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta all follow the road cleared by the early religious radicals. Dunbar's book rescues from obscurity the individuals who were ultimately responsible for these institutions, and in doing so provides us with excellent and inspirational history. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Three Brothers
Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man
Special Treatment

Francesco Rosi is a sweet-tempered man with a yearning affection for the ocher landscape and profound family relationships of Southern Italy. His feelings for the region are so strong that he made a lyric film from Carol Levi's angry and despairing *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. Now he has gone back there again for *Three Brothers*, whose script he derived from a novel by A. Platonov.

A strain of melancholy runs through the picture, because Rosi, though he believes there is solace and strength to be found in that peasant world, knows also that it is a vanishing world. The plot of *Three Brothers* is very simple: an old woman has died, and her husband (the celebrated French actor Charles Vanel) summons their sons to her funeral. They are modern men, and they bring home with them the fears and perplexities of contemporary Italy. The eldest, Raffaele (Philippe Noiret), is a judge in Rome; he presides over the trials of terrorists and carries an automatic, his life being in danger. Rocco (Vittorio Mezzogiorno) lives in Naples; he teaches in a school for wayward boys who steal and traffic in drugs. Nicola (Michele Placido) is the youngest, a factory worker from Turin, active in labor strife. Estranged from his wife, he has brought with him their little daughter.

The two days of this reunion are not eventful. The sons are gentle with their grieving father; they look up old friends; they talk together through a long night, and dream, each of them, about the scenes to which they must soon return. The substance of the movie is the mutual affection that wells up in these brothers, who have grown so far apart but are briefly reunited by the realization that they find themselves awkwardly out of place in the serene community where they once belonged. Even when they are brought together, their love does not bridge the disparities of their adult lives. After the funeral, they go their ways—all except the little girl, who has formed an almost wordless bond with her grandfather and who is allowed to stay on with him for a time.

It is hard to convey the power of a film whose excellence derives so specifically from its quietness. Rosi's *Three Brothers* is a celebration of tenderness and of a way of life that was austere but sustaining, and is gone beyond recovery.

Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci from his own script, also deals with a domestic situation set against the background of Italy's social turmoil. But unlike *Three Brothers*, it is, to say the least, intricately plotted.

The story offered is peculiar almost to the point of exasperation. A rich man's son has been kidnapped—or, as seems increasingly probable, has collaborated in his own abduction, hoping thus to raise a ransom on behalf of an extremist political group. If that is the

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case, he planned not only to rob his father for ideological reasons but also to settle some personal scores by staging the crime under his father's eyes. The youth had just given him a pair of binoculars, the better to view events on a road near the family factory. But why, if the kidnapping is a hoax, should word come that the victim has been killed? The conspirators could hardly have foreseen that the father, believing his son dead, would nevertheless put the ransom together by borrowing from rich friends, his motive being to use it for his financially shaky cheese business. Or that the mother, who is not informed of the alleged execution, would make sure the conspirators' demands were met. It is not so stated, but we may decide that the father believes very little that is told him by two of his young factory workers, who turn out to be his son's girl and his closest friend. I hasten to add that the money is paid over to persons unknown, that the son reappears as though dropped from the sky, and that he and his father are happily reunited. I try never to reveal the denouement of mysteries; with enigmas I am less punctilious.

Bertolucci has shown a taste for riddles before this; *The Conformist* and *The Spider's Stratagem* were works of less than perfect clarity. In his latest film he has, I think, devised a nonsensical plot as a poetic way of asserting that the passions and terrors that now roil Italy make a nonsense of society. If his film defies understanding, it is the more in tune with the time and place in which it occurs.

His people, it should be noted, are complex but not unfathomable, and the story, whatever it may be, serves to bring them out. Primo, self-styled ridiculous, is the center around which the others revolve. He is ridiculous, as he sees it, because it is absurd that such a one as he, an unlettered and untalented peasant boy, should find himself in middle age the proprietor of a large cheese factory, the husband of a beautiful French aristocrat and the owner of an elegant house overlooking the North Italian countryside. But he does have a talent—it is for getting on with people, and for him that is no pose; he is a very chameleon of empathy.

When the youth is snatched, Primo falls into a restless passivity; his wife, anticipating the demand that will be made, begins in a frenzy to itemize their assets, commercial and personal. He knows it is a naïve enterprise, chattels and real estate not being that readily converted to cash, but he goes along with it, counting the cheeses in storage and doing the multiplication in his head. He admires her spirit and responds to her vitality. They make love—it would seem their first embrace in some time.

One day, when he is in a particularly dark mood, Primo comes upon two of his maids dancing to rock-and-roll in the kitchen. They are abashed to be caught cavorting in the sad house, but he urges them on. And, since dancing seems to him their proper avocation, he joins in—deftly while his wind holds out. With Laura and Adelfo, his son's friends, Primo's relationship is especially revealing, both of him and of them. He is their boss and they wouldn't mind seeing him squirm. But Primo does not squirm. He takes them matter-of-factly for what they are: a couple of rebellious kids inflamed by the slogans of the day, probably in cahoots to bilk him but nevertheless closer to Giovanni than he has been. They get along famously. With Laura he even becomes intimate (just how intimate I am not certain), each responding to the peasant toughness in the other. Adelfo, when he is not working as Primo's swineherd (a cheese factory fattens pigs on the whey), studies to be a worker-priest and drives the union van on mysterious errands. He fancies himself a puzzle to the bourgeois mind, but Primo is not burdened by that sort of mind. He is amused by the theatrics of the solemn boy. These three never quite bridge the generation gap, but they end by talking across it.

Ugo Tognazzi, who plays the title role, is an actor of mercurial wit (he is best known here as the mordant "straight" man of *La Cage aux Folles*). He throws a disarming appearance of simplicity across Primo's reactions to the bizarre entanglements of his personal and business affairs, thus realizing Bertolucci's intention of matching a ridiculous man with his ridiculous times. Barbara, Primo's wife, is played by Anouk Aimee; the young conspirators are Laura Morante and Victor Cavallo.

One way to enjoy *Special Treatment*, a Yugoslav movie directed by Goran Paskaljevic, is to take it as a hilarious putdown of a pompous, petty tyrant. Another way is to admire the sly dexterity with which Eastern European artists slip political jibes past their less imaginative censors.

Briefly, the film recounts the misadventures of Dr. Ilich (Ljuba Tadic), a specialist in alcoholism who undertakes to cure his charges by a combination of physical exercises (principally running in circles and flapping arms to simulate the flight of birds) and the enactment of psychodramas based on their own histories of inebriation. This regimen is supported by the example of the doctor's rectitude.

Ilich has such confidence in his therapy that he takes the troupe to perform at a brewery, where excessive quaffing on the assembly line has been having an effect on profits. The results are disastrously unlike what had been hoped for, nor is Ilich quite the man he pretends to be. However, he declares that he will persist in seeking to cure his scapegrace crew if it takes him the rest of his life—and theirs. At the end, he has them out in a field, flapping their arms. Some real birds pass overhead as the sad little group performs its antics. That is the closest the film comes to admitting that it means more than it says.

Special Treatment, which has not been released in this country, is being shown as part of the New Yorker Films festival (March 7-13; Film Forum II at 57 Watts Street, New York City). □

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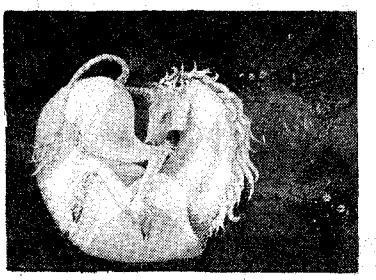

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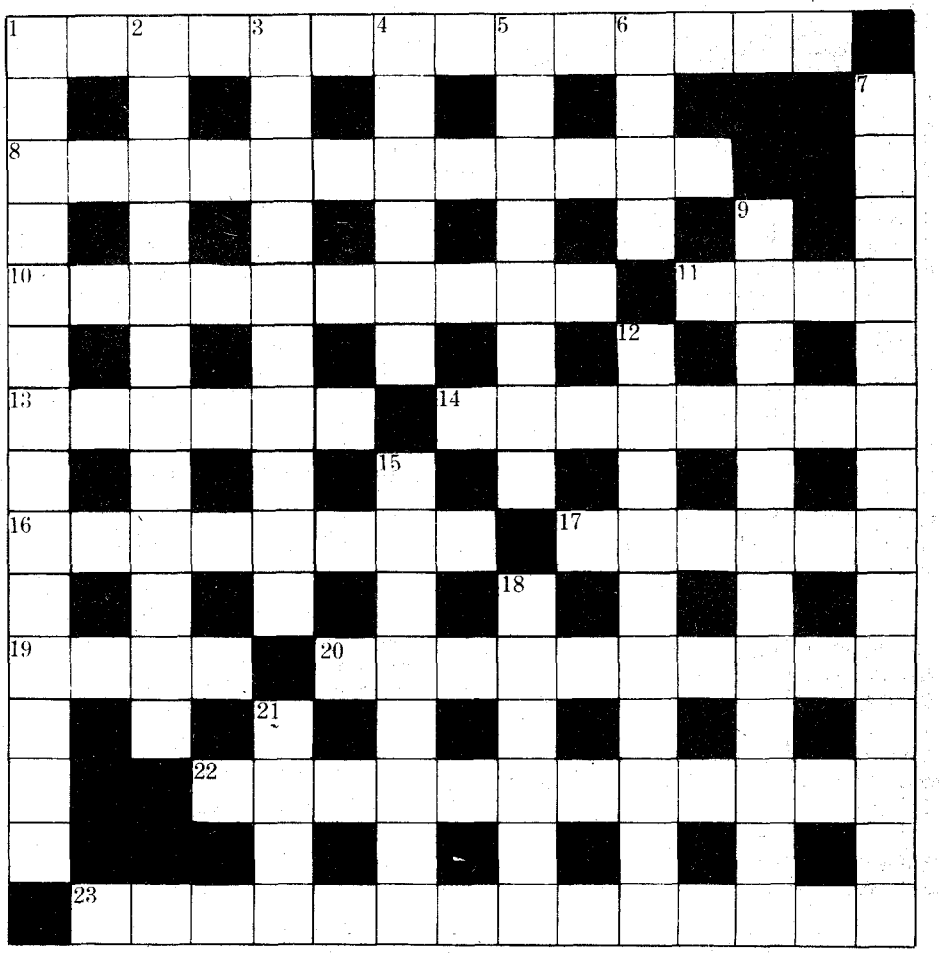

ACROSS

1 A sort of bedside lunch he got of late. (6,8)
8 You might read part of a reputedly good book—other than the old will! (3,9)
10 Balzac tales? (10)
11 She might form an attachment with "the unknown." (4)
13 Oh, you'll find the expense around—but look for the one who's giving the party with you! (2-4)
14 Suggestive of unemployment pay when the rent comes 'round. (8)
16 Sweet sounding siren? It's perfectly obvious! (3-5)
17 Did she sheep her lose in the Mikado? (4-2)
19 The side of a diamond, like a number of Clementine's shoes. (4)
20 The van of the force. (5,5)
22 Wardens (or Phi Beta Kappas). (3,9)
23 The birds sound like they might have emulated Joe Louis. (5,9)

DOWN

1 Did he turn his coat red? (8,6)
2 Sounds as though it gives color to the flattering tale! Keep it up! (3,2,3,4)
3 Not necessarily good points, but overcunning. (10)
4 Are its changes literary composition? (6)
5 Dirty linen should be, rather than restricted. (8)
6 Hill which might be bare, otherwise. (4)
7 Euphemism for garments you don't see, let alone talk about. (10)
9 Permanent ice, when broken up, implies no fondness for water. (12)
12 No single person is liable to be found on one of these. (10)
15 Pig to all accounts for the druggist's holdings. (8)
18 Does he count on both fingers and toes, or just scratch the surface? (6)
21 A catty sound, as some own, in part. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1905

I	L	L	G	O	T	T	E	N	G	A	I	N	S	■
D	■	A	■	R	■	A	■	U	■	O	■	O	■	O
E	L	Y	S	I	A	N	■	D	E	R	I	V	E	D
N	■	D	■	G	■	G	■	E	■	T	■	I	■	E
T	R	O	P	I	C	■	O	F	C	A	N	C	E	R
I	■	W	■	N	■	F	■	I	■	■	■	E	■	■
C	■	N	E	A	R	I	N	G	■	O	A	S	I	S
A	■	■	■	T	■	R	■	U	■	P	■	■	■	I
L	O	U	S	E	■	S	C	R	E	E	D	S	■	L
■	■	N	■	■	■	T	■	E	■	N	■	I	■	K
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W	■	C	■	R	■	I	■	A	■	O	■	E	■	O
I	R	O	N	I	N	G	■	C	R	U	I	S	E	R
N	■	R	■	M	■	H	■	H	■	S	■	I	■	M
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